

United States Department of Agriculture



# Technical Service Provider Handbook



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## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart A – General Information**

#### **610.0 Introduction**

A. The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance on the procedures the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will use to utilize technical service procedures (TSPs). The 2002 Farm Bill amended the 1985 Farm Bill, which authorized use of TSPs, by requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow producers to receive technical assistance by individuals and entities other than NRCS. This provision is designed to ensure NRCS has the capacity to address the significant workload associated with implementing Farm Bill programs. TSP assistance is another tool for NRCS to use in the implementation of conservation programs. TSPs must be competent to perform technical services in most aspects of conservation including conservation planning, design, layout, installation, and checkout conservation practices.

B. NRCS may pay a participant with whom NRCS has a program contract or other applicable agreement if the participant selects an individual, entity, American Indian Tribe or public agency from the certified list of TSPs and if the provided technical services meet all legal, technical, and programmatic requirements.

C. NRCS may also obtain technical or support services directly through procurement contracts, contribution agreements, cooperative agreements or other appropriate instruments for obtaining technical assistance services provided by a TSP.

D. TechReg is NRCS' online tools for TSPs to register, become certified, and manage their TSP profiles. TechReg also helps landowners locate and choose certified registered TSPs who can help them meet their conservation goals.

#### **610.1 Authorities, USDA Regulations, and NRCS Policies, Procedures, and Guidance**

A. Final Rule. NRCS issued a final rule, 7 CFR Part 652, Technical Service Provider Assistance, as authorized under Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Food Security Act), as amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171 (2002 Farm Bill). The final rule was published in the Federal Register on November 29, 2004. It sets forth the final process for providing conservation technical assistance through TSPs. The final rule is accessible through Online Resources of the TechReg Web site, <http://techreg.usda.gov>, and is contained in this Handbook as Exhibit 610.80, TSP Assistance Final Rule.

B. TSP Assistance Policy. NRCS published TSP Assistance Policy in the Web-based NRCS Electronic Directives System in July 2005, <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov>.

- (1) Title 180, Conservation Planning and Application, General Manual, Part 411, Technical Service Provider Assistance Policy, [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/GM\\_180\\_411.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/GM_180_411.htm),
- (2) Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual, Part 502, Terms and Abbreviations Common to All Programs, [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M\\_440\\_502\\_C.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M_440_502_C.htm), and

- (3) Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual, Part 504, Technical Service Provider Assistance, [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M\\_440\\_504.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M_440_504.htm).

C. Authorities for Agreements.

- (1) The authority for contribution agreements is Section 714 of the 2001 USDA Appropriation Act, Public Law 106-387. NRCS policy and guidance is in Title 120, Administrative Services, General Manual, Part 401, Agreements, accessible at [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/GM\\_120\\_401.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/GM_120_401.htm).
- (2) NRCS policy and guidance for cooperative agreements are located in the Title 120, Administrative Services, General Manual, Part 401, Agreements, accessible at [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/GM\\_120\\_401.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/GM_120_401.htm), and the NRCS Federal Grants and Cooperative Agreements Handbook, accessible at <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/H/H.htm>.
- (3) Economy Act of 1932, as amended, 31 U.S.C. 1535, and the Federal Acquisition Regulations and related OMB Circulars.

D. Authorities and Related Regulations for Appeals and Mediation.

- (1) Statutory authorities include:
  - (i) 7 U.S.C. 6991 et seq., Public Law 103-354, Title II, The Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994;
  - (ii) Public Law 104-320, Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996;
  - (iii) Public Law 102-354, Administrative Procedure Technical Amendments Act of 1991; and
  - (iv) Public Law 101-552, Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1990.
- (2) Rules and Regulations include:
  - (i) 7 CFR 614, NRCS Appeals and Mediation Procedure;
  - (ii) 7 CFR 780, FSA Appeals Procedure;
  - (iii) 7 CFR 11, NAD Appeals Procedure; and
  - (iv) 7 CFR 1946, Mediation.
- (3) NRCS policy includes:
  - (i) Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual, Part 510, Appeals and Mediation; and
  - (ii) Title 110, Management, General Manual, Part 404, Alternative Dispute Resolution.

E. Authorities for Technical Assistance Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.

- (1) The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act, 15 U.S.C. Sec. 714m, Crimes and Offenses, describes the crimes and offenses, and the punishment thereof, relating to Commodity Credit Corporation business, including the use of false statements, embezzlement, larceny, and conspiracy to commit offense, and the general statutes of applicability.
- (2) USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 1110-2, Management Accountability and Control, establishes Department-wide policy for all agencies and staff offices to improve the accountability and effectiveness of USDA programs and operations through the use of sound systems of internal and management controls to reasonably ensure that programs and resources are protected from waste, fraud, and mismanagement.

F. Relationship to NRCS Policies and Procedures.

- (1) The users of this Handbook need to become familiar with other NRCS policies and procedures, accessible through the NRCS Electronic Directives System, <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov>, related to delivery of technical services, such as:

- (i) Planning policy found in the Title 180, Conservation Planning and Application, General Manual, Part 409, National Planning Procedures Handbook.
- (ii) Technical policies and procedures such as complying with the National Environmental Policy (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
- (iii) Discipline manuals and handbooks (such as, agronomy, biology, cultural resources and procedures, economics, engineering, range and pasture, etc.).
- (iv) Program manuals including the Conservation Programs Manual (CPM).
- (2) TSP Handbook users also need to become familiar with technical guides, planning tools and other technical resources, such as:
  - (i) The electronic Field Office Technical Guide, accessible through the NRCS homepage and <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>.
  - (ii) Various approved automated planning tools available through the Programs link on the NRCS homepage, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>.

## 610.2 Definitions

Definitions for TSP Assistance are located in the Conservation Programs Manual, Title 440, Part 502, Terms and Abbreviations Common to All Programs, Subpart C, Technical Service Provider Assistance Terms, accessible at [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M\\_440\\_502\\_C.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M_440_502_C.htm)

## 610.3 Ethics

A. Memorandums of Understanding and associated agreements between NRCS, conservation partners and American Indian Tribes are to be evaluated and modified to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof for those that choose to engage in providing technical services as TSPs in accordance with participant acquisition of technical services.

B. NRCS employees are prohibited from:

- (1) Providing references for TSP applicants;
- (2) Working as a TSP; and
- (3) Recommending specific TSPs to participants.

C. Employee involvement in TSP assistance. There are potential ethics issues when NRCS employees seek to serve as TSPs, have financial interest in a TSP, or seek to work under the auspices of a TSP. Accordingly, NRCS employees should consult with the NRCS Ethics Office, accessible through the NRCS homepage at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/directory.management.html>, before acting in any of these capacities to avoid possible violations of government ethics rules.

- (1) Approval to engage in outside employment. Certain NRCS employees must obtain prior approval from the State Conservationist/Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area or Deputy Chief for Management before engaging in outside employment. Those employees file financial disclosure reports. Employees who do not file financial disclosure reports are not required to obtain NRCS approval to engage in outside employment. However, the ethics rules relating to conflicting interests and prohibited representation do apply.
- (2) Conflicting interest. Ethics rules prohibit a government employee from taking official actions on particular matters affecting the employee's financial interests.

(3) Prohibited representation. Ethics laws generally bar Federal employees from representing anyone else before Federal agencies other than in the proper discharge of official duties.

#### **610.4 Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act**

- A. When the participant is receiving technical services from TSPs hired by NRCS, the inclusion of a non-disclosure clause will be included in NRCS agreements and contracts to ensure that confidentiality of a program participant's personal information is maintained.
- B. TSPs hired directly by participants are not subject to Federal disclosure and privacy laws, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act. NRCS encourages participants to include appropriate confidentiality of personal information in contracts entered into with TSPs.
- C. Responses to FOIA requests should consider the following points regarding how much information to share about program participants:
- (1) NRCS will accept requests from both TSPs and potential TSPs.
  - (2) NRCS will not ask for the reason the requestor wants to the information. The reason does affect the NRCS decision-making process.
  - (3) Before award, NRCS can not release any information on applicants.
  - (4) Following award, NRCS may release the awardee's full name, address (including only city, state, and county), program, and the value of the award. NRCS may not release other information by citing exemption 6, of the Privacy Act but should cite the exemption for the Confidentiality Rule Provisions.
  - (5) A court case (Washington Post vs. USDA) found that the public's need to know outweighs Federal government protections concerning farm program beneficiaries.
  - (6) Following consultation with the USDA Office of General Counsel, NRCS intends to publish this information on all awardees on the Web to diminish the number of FOIA requests received in State-level offices.
  - (7) "TSP Express," an electronic report for certified TSPs available on TechReg, <http://techreg.usda.gov/>, may be reviewed for FOIA policy-related articles.

#### **610.5 Responsibilities**

The following responsibilities outline the basis for TSP implementation:

- A. Individuals, private sector entities, public agencies, American Indian Tribes and individuals:
- (1) Must be certified as TSPs by NRCS or under contract or agreement with USDA before providing technical assistance to participants; and
  - (2) Are responsible for all expenses associated with becoming certified as a TSP or with renewing certification.
- B. NRCS will:
- (1) Establish national certification, certification renewal, decertification, and recertification processes for TSPs.
  - (2) Ensure that participants receive necessary technical assistance directly from NRCS or through assistance from a TSP.
  - (3) Reimburse participants or make direct payment to TSPs upon receipt of an assignment of payment from participants.



- (4) Establish and publish payment rates, called not-to-exceed (NTE) rates, applicable when participants contract directly with TSPs for technical services; allow for state-level adjustment of NTE rates on a case by case basis; require state-level coordination of NTE rates between adjacent states where needed; and review payment rates at least annually and adjust the rates based upon available data.
- (5) Ensure that the process to make payments for TSP services is in accordance with the policy specific to the conservation program being utilized.
- (6) Implement an accountability system to measure and monitor progress, overall use, performance, and accomplishments of certified TSPs.
- (7) Make technology and technological tools widely available for use by TSPs, reserving the option to apply fees to specific technology and tools.
- (8) Retain responsibility for all decision-making and consultation required by Federal agencies related to compliance with resource protection laws.
- (9) Use NRCS appeals and mediation policy to resolve disputes regarding technical services acquired from TSPs. (See Subpart F)
- (10) Incorporate appropriate bonding and insurance requirements in any contract or agreement entered into with a TSP.
- (11) Encourage participants to address bonding, insurance and liability issues in any contract or agreement they enter into with a TSP.
- (12) Establish policy and procedures regarding technical assistance waste, fraud, and abuse and reporting mechanisms.

C. Technical Service Providers:

- (1) Must be certified by NRCS or under an agreement or contract with NRCS in order to provide technical assistance directly to participants.
- (2) Must ensure that assistance provided to participants meets NRCS technical standards and specifications.
- (3) Are responsible for obtaining training they need to become certified as TSPs, for establishing and maintaining training records, and providing training documentation to NRCS or to recommending organizations.
- (4) May utilize the services of certified subcontractors, as provided by NRCS policy.
- (5) May help collect or assess data to support processing program applications, but administrative and program responsibility will remain with NRCS, including determining eligibility, ranking applications, approving contracts, practice payments, etc.
- (6) Are responsible for providing technical assistance that is in compliance with appropriate statutory and regulatory requirements.
- (7) Are to work with participants to help ensure that all approvals, authorities, rights, permits, and easements necessary for the implementation, operation, and maintenance of conservation practices have been obtained prior to conservation practice installation when the scope of services agreed upon includes check-out.
- (8) Are responsible for the technical services provided, including any costs, damages, claims, liabilities, and judgments arising from past, present, and future negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of the TSP in connection with the technical service provided.
- (9) Must accept responsibility in writing for the particular technical services provided.
- (10) May be decertified if they do not abide by the requirements of the certification agreement.

D. Participants:

- (1) May select either NRCS or a TSP to perform the technical services needed.

- (2) Will receive payment for the technical services provided by a TSP up to the NRCS-determined not-to-exceed rate, or the rate determined by the State Conservationist.
- (3) Are responsible for meeting compliance and regulatory responsibilities, obtaining necessary records, and ensuring payment provisions are included in the conservation program contract or agreement prior to employing TSP services.
- (4) Must meet eligibility requirements for participating in the conservation program for which costs are incurred and meeting all NRCS program requirements.
- (5) Are responsible for safeguarding against waste, fraud, and abuse.

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### **Subpart B – Responsibilities**

#### **610.10 Participants**

- A. May select either NRCS or a TSP to perform the technical services needed.
- B. Will receive payment for the technical services provided by a TSP up to the NRCS-determined not-to-exceed rate, or the rate determined by the State Conservationist/Director of the Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area.
- C. Are responsible for meeting compliance and regulatory responsibilities, obtaining necessary records, and ensuring payment provisions are included in the conservation program contract or agreement prior to employing TSP services.
- D. Must meet eligibility requirements for participating in the conservation program for which costs are incurred and meeting all NRCS program requirements.
- E. Are responsible for safeguarding against waste, fraud, and abuse.

#### **610.11 Individuals, Private Sector Entities, Public Agencies, American Indian Tribes, and Individuals**

- A. Must be certified as TSPs by NRCS or under contract or agreement with USDA before providing technical assistance to participants; and
- B. Are responsible for all expenses associated with becoming certified as a TSP or with renewing certification.

#### **610.12 Technical Service Providers**

- A. Must be certified by NRCS or under an agreement or contract with NRCS in order to provide technical assistance directly to participants.
- B. Must ensure that assistance provided to participants meets NRCS technical standards and specifications.
- C. Are responsible for obtaining training they need to become certified as TSPs, for establishing and maintaining training records, and providing training documentation to NRCS or to recommending organizations.
- D. May utilize the services of certified subcontractors, as provided by NRCS policy.
- E. May help collect or assess data to support processing program applications, but administrative and program responsibility will remain with NRCS, including determining eligibility, ranking applications, approving contracts, practice payments, etc.
- F. Are responsible for providing technical assistance that is in compliance with appropriate statutory and regulatory requirements.
- G. Are to work with participants to help ensure that all approvals, authorities, rights, permits, and easements necessary for the implementation, operation, and maintenance of conservation practices have been obtained prior to conservation practice installation when the scope of services agreed upon includes check-out.

- H. Are responsible for the technical services provided, including any costs, damages, claims, liabilities, and judgments arising from past, present, and future negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of the TSP in connection with the technical service provided.
- I. Must accept responsibility in writing for the particular technical services provided.
- J. May be decertified if they do not abide by the requirements of the certification agreement.

### **610.13 NRCS**

- A. Establish national certification, certification renewal, decertification, and recertification processes for TSPs.
- B. Ensure that participants receive necessary technical assistance directly from NRCS or through assistance from a TSP.
- C. Reimburse participants or make direct payment to TSPs upon receipt of an assignment of payment from participants.
- D. Establish and publish payment rates, called not-to-exceed (NTE) rates, applicable when participants contract directly with TSPs for technical services; allow for state-level adjustment of NTE rates on a case by case basis; require state-level coordination of NTE rates between adjacent states where needed; and review payment rates at least annually and adjust the rates based upon available data.
- E. Ensure that the process to make payments for TSP services is in accordance with the policy specific to the conservation program being utilized.
- F. Implement an accountability system to measure and monitor progress, overall use, performance, and accomplishments of certified TSPs.
- G. Make technology and technological tools widely available for use by TSPs, reserving the option to apply fees to specific technology and tools.
- H. Retain responsibility for all decision-making and consultation required by Federal agencies related to compliance with resource protection laws.
- I. Use NRCS appeals and mediation policy to resolve disputes regarding technical services acquired from TSPs. (See Subpart F, Measurement and Accountability System)
- J. Incorporate appropriate bonding and insurance requirements in any contract or agreement entered into with a TSP.
- K. Encourage participants to address bonding, insurance and liability issues in any contract or agreement they enter into with a TSP.
- L. Establish policy and procedures regarding technical assistance waste, fraud, and abuse and reporting mechanisms.

## **Part 610 - Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart C – Certification**

#### **610.20 General Requirements**

A. NRCS will administer a national certification process utilizing national certification criteria as set forth by 7 CFR Part 652, Technical Service Provider Assistance. Also regarded as the final rule, it is accessible through Online Resources of the TechReg Web site, <http://techreg.usda.gov>, and is contained in this Handbook as Exhibit 610.80, TSP Assistance Final Rule.

B. Individuals, entities, public agencies and American Indian Tribes meeting the certification criteria for the technical services they desire to provide may be certified by NRCS to provide technical services in the States and the Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas (Territories) and counties in which they request certification.

C. Certification encompasses specific categories of conservation practices, conservation planning, and other technical services. State Conservationists and Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas are not expected to utilize those conservation practices or technical services that do not apply to their particular States and Territories.

D. Applicants are required to sign a Certification Agreement with NRCS to become certified. The TSP Certification Agreement, contained in this Handbook at Exhibit 610.81, includes the terms and conditions of the certification.

E. Applicants must become certified and be placed on the NRCS-approved list of TSPs before they are eligible to provide technical services as a TSP, in accordance with the 2002 Farm Bill and 7 CFR Part 652.

F. Employees of public agencies seeking certification to provide technical services outside of the auspices of their employing agency, or who have or are obtaining a financial interest in a TSP business or organization are to follow the appropriate ethics requirements of their employing agency when providing technical services as an individual or through a business or organization.

G. NRCS may enter into a memorandum of understanding with qualified organizations to operate as recommending organizations which will review, train and/or test qualifications of TSP applicants and recommend applicants to NRCS for certification.

H. State Conservationists or Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas, in whose State or Territory a TSP is certified to provide technical service, may decertify the TSP, a private-sector entity, American Indian Tribe or public agency and all members thereof or specifically named certified individuals of the entity, Tribe or agency pursuant to the decertification process set forth at 7 CFR Part 652, Subpart C, Decertification.

#### **610.21 Certification Exemptions and Criteria**

A. Certification Exemptions.

Conservation districts, public agencies, American Indian Tribes and others partnering with NRCS under a revised cooperative working agreement or a memorandum of understanding in conjunction with NRCS acquisition of technical services through contribution agreements, may not be subject to the national certification process. They are, however, subject to the

specific terms and conditions contained in the contribution agreement and any revisions to the cooperative working agreement or the memorandum of understanding for delivering technical services as TSPs.

- (1) Individuals, entities, public agencies and American Indian Tribes entering into procurement contracts or cooperative agreements with NRCS are also not subject to certification in TechReg. The qualification and performance criteria will be a part of the contract or agreement.
- (2) Technical services obtained directly by NRCS through the following methods are exempt from the certification process:
  - (i) Procurement Contracts,
  - (ii) Contribution Agreements,
  - (iii) Cooperative Agreements, and
  - (iv) Other appropriate legal instruments, in accordance with applicable competition and selection criteria.

**B. Certification Criteria.**

- (1) To qualify for certification, applicants must: have the technical training, education, or experience to perform the level of technical service for which certification is sought. Necessary requirements for specific categories of technical service are found on the TechReg Web site, <http://techreg.usda.gov>. Successful applicants must:
  - (i) Meet any applicable professional or business licensing, permitting, or similar qualification standards established by State (and equivalent), local or Tribal or Federal law (for cultural resources compliance or planning services, must meet the Professional Qualification Standards for the specific services they are to perform. (See Section 112(a)(1)(A) of the NHPA.)
  - (ii) Demonstrate, through documentation of training or experience, familiarity with NRCS guidelines, criteria, conservation practice standards and specifications as set forth in applicable NRCS manuals, handbooks, field office technical guides, and supplements thereto for conservation planning, and designing and applying specific conservation practices and management systems for which certification is sought.
  - (iii) Not be decertified as a TSP at the time of application for certification.
  - (iv) Be familiar with any unique requirements at the county level or on specific Tribal lands for particular conservation practices or technical services before providing those services locally. Applicants must agree to familiarize themselves with those requirements by contacting the appropriate NRCS conservationist before providing technical services.
  - (v) On behalf of their employing entity, an American Indian Tribe or public agency wishing to qualify for certification, must be authorized to provide such services in the jurisdiction.
- (2) TSPs must enter into a Certification Agreement with NRCS specifying the terms and conditions of the certification unless exempted under Section 610.21, Certification Exemptions and Criteria, A. Certification Exemptions, of this Subpart.
- (3) NRCS will certify TSPs for a time period specified by NRCS not to exceed three years. Renewal of certification will be handled as found in Section 610.25, Certification Renewal, of this Subpart.
- (4) NRCS may, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9701, establish and collect fees for the certification of TSPs.

## **610.22 Submitting an Application for Certification**

A. In order to be considered for certification as a TSP, individuals must submit an application for certification to NRCS by fulfilling the certification requirements and documenting them as a part of the application process through TechReg (<http://techreg.usda.gov>). Upon receipt of a complete certification application documenting that certification criteria has been met, NRCS will:

- (1) Check that the applicant meets the requirements in accordance with Section 610.24, Verification of TSP Certification Applications, of this Subpart and, if all requirements are met, then
- (2) Enter into a Certification Agreement with the applicant,
- (3) Place the applicant on the NRCS-approved list of TSP; and
- (4) Make available to the public the list of approved TSPs by practice or category of technical service.

B. In order for a private sector entity or public agency to obtain certification as a TSP, it must:

- (1) Have the requisite professional and business licensure for states it seeks certification for, or in the case of a public agency, the authority within its jurisdiction to provide technical services as a TSP.
- (2) Seek certification in TechReg as an individual as part of the entity or agency certification and ensures that the requirements for certification in the application support such certification.
- (3) Enter into a certification agreement that shall:
  - (i) Identify the certified individual(s) who are authorized to perform technical services on behalf of the entity or agency;
  - (ii) Require that, at all times, an individual who is certified in TechReg, is authorized to act on the entity or agency's behalf;
  - (iii) Require that the entity or agency promptly provide an amended Certification Agreement to NRCS for approval when the list of certified individuals performing technical services changes;
  - (iv) Require that responsibility for any work performed by non-certified individuals be assumed by a individual certified in TechReg authorized to act on the entity or agency's behalf;
  - (v) Require that the entity be liable for the work performed by any individual working under the auspices of its certification.

## **610.23 Agreements with Recommending Organizations**

A. NRCS may enter into agreements, including memorandums of understanding or other appropriate instrument, with a recommending organization that NRCS determines has an adequate accreditation program in place to train, test, and evaluate candidates for competency in a particular area or areas of technical service delivery and whose accreditation program NRCS determines meets the certification criteria as set forth for the technical services to be provided. See Exhibit 610. 82, Sample Memorandum of Understanding between NRCS and Recommending Organizations, of this Part.

B. Recommending organizations will, pursuant to an agreement entered into with NRCS:

- (1) Train, test, and evaluate candidates for competency in the category of technical services applicants wish to be certified to deliver;

- (2) Verify that candidates meet the certification requirements the recommending agency is evaluating for the specific category of technical services.
- (3) Make available to NRCS the individuals identified by the recommending organization as meeting the NRCS criteria they are evaluating for specific practices or categories of technical service(s).
- (4) Inform individuals seeking accreditations in their organization that they must meet these and other requirements necessary for certification in a technical service category,, including entering into a Certification Agreement with NRCS, in order to provide technical services under this part;
- (5) Reassess individuals that request renewal of their certification in accordance with Subpart B, 610.25, Certification Renewal;
- (6) Notify NRCS of any concerns or problems that may affect the organization's recommendation concerning the individual's certification, recertification, certification renewal, or technical service delivery.

C. Upon receipt of the list of individual(s) from the recommending organization NRCS will update information in TechReg. These individuals must follow submit an application for certification as outlined in Section 610.22, Submitting an Application for Certification.

D. NRCS will notify recommending organizations concerning any changes in the agency's certification criteria for individuals to become certified to provide specific technical services.

E. NRCS may terminate an agreement with a recommending organization if concerns or problems with its accreditation program, its recommendations for certification, or other requirements under the agreement arise.

F. Current memorandums of understandings with recommending organizations can be found on the TechReg Web site, <http://techreg.usda.gov>.

## **610.24 Verification of TSP Certification Applications**

### **A. Overview and Process.**

- (1) The TSP certification process includes a national application process and individual State-level certification criteria verification.
  - (i) Within 60 days of receiving an application for certification from an individual, private sector entity, public agency or American Indian Tribe, NRCS, in the State/Pacific Basin or Caribbean Areas where the applicant resides (resident State/Territory), will determine whether the applicant meets the certification requirements by verifying:
    - (ii) Training, education, and experience;
    - (iii) Reference information;
    - (iv) Individual State-level requirements, licensing, etc.;
    - (v) That the applicant has not been de-certified;
    - (vi) That the applicant has signed the certification agreement. (See Exhibit 610.81, Technical Service Provider Certification Agreement of this Part.)
- (2) The applicant must demonstrate on the application their familiarity with NRCS guidelines, criteria, standards, and specifications for which certification is sought.
- (3) For applicants who are applying for certification in more than one State/Territory, the resident State/Territory will verify compliance with the certification criteria and completeness of application as stated in Paragraph B, Methodology for Verifying Certification Applications, of this Section, and will do one of the following:



- (i) The resident State/Territory verifies that the applicant meets all certification requirements (e.g., training, education, experience, etc.) plus any specific resident State/Territory requirements, and, within 30 days will notify by e-mail the other States/Territories in which the applicant has requested to become certified. The notified States/Territories will then verify the applicant meets specific State-level requirements and respond to the resident State/Territory within 30 days (for a 60 day verification time frame); or
- (ii) The resident State/Territory determines that the applicant does not meet certification requirements, and will immediately notify the other States/Territories where the applicant has requested certification (30 day maximum).
- (4) Once verification is complete NRCS will either:
  - (i) Certify the applicant as a TSP and place the applicant on the approved TSP list; or
  - (ii) Notify the applicant of missing information and request that the applicant provide additional information or that the applicant does not meet the requirements and that the applicant must take action to meet requirements if certification is desired.
- (5) The maintenance and disposition of application verification records will be the responsibility of the resident State/Territory.

#### B. Methodology for Verifying Certification Application

- (1) Applicants seek certification in a selected category based on a specific option which has various criteria. The terminology below explains key facets of information that will be reviewed in order to verify the certification application. (See Exhibit 610.83, Terminology Example from TechReg, of this Part.)
  - (i) Category – the subject and types of technical service available for certification. The conservation practices associated with the service are listed. Currently TechReg includes 42 technical service categories. Proficiency requirements, which describe knowledge, skills or abilities required within each category, will be made a part of the category level.
  - (ii) Option – the different choices or avenues through which to become certified within the category. An applicant must satisfy at least one option for category certification. Currently the number of options range from one to 10 per category.
  - (iii) Criteria – the certification standards or requirements for specific options. All criteria within a chosen option must be met in order to be certified. NRCS will continue to evaluate criteria to make them more specific and to aid in the verification process.
  - (iv) There are five types of criteria that must be verified. Verification methods are suggested to States/Territories for their consideration in support of the national process outlined in Paragraph A, Overview and Process of this Section. The following is a listing and a brief description of common verification methods for each type:
    - Licenses or Permits:
      - Criteria refer to licenses (such as Engineers or Pesticide Applicators licenses) and permits (such as Cultural Resources Investigation permits).
      - Common Verification Methods:
        - Publicly accessible via the Internet (See Exhibits 610.83, State License Engineers: Texas Web site and Exhibit 610.84, State License Engineers: Illinois Web site, of this Part.)
        - Contact TSP for proof of license or permit.
    - Certifications:

- Criteria refer to certifications that may be national in scope or State-level specific. Some examples include Crop Advisors, Certified – Conservation Planner, Nutrient Management, and Prescribed Burning.
- Common Verification Methods:
  - Publicly accessible via Certification Organization Web site (See Exhibits 610.85, ASA Certification Registry Web site, and Exhibit 610.86 Wildlife Society Certification Registry Web site, of this Part.)
  - Direct contact with Agency/Organization who gave certification.
  - Applicant provides proof of certification.
- Education:
  - Criteria refer to formal education or college degree.
  - Common Verification Methods:
    - Applicant provides a copy of diploma.
    - Applicant provides copy of transcript(s).
    - Contact the college/university, etc., to verify degree.
- Training:
  - Criteria refer to the training courses required by a specific option. Some of the courses are offered by NRCS such as Conservation Planning modules, and some are provided by external organizations such as the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning course.
  - Common Verification Methods:
    - Contact the Information Technology Specialist, National Employee Development Center (NEDC) (tracking system will be standardized) by telephone at (817) 509-3242 or send an e-mail to [ssriparameswaran@ftw.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:ssriparameswaran@ftw.nrcs.usda.gov).
    - Contact NRCS State.Territory office where modules were completed.
    - Contact training organization.
    - Applicant provides copy of training certificate or proof of completed training.
- Experience:
  - Criteria refers to work performed relative to the category that applicant seeks certification.
  - Common Verification Methods:
    - Contact References.
    - Obtain knowledge about performance from local NRCS office.
    - Interview applicant or associations to assess type of experience referenced in resume. (See Exhibit 610.87, Sample Interview Questions, of this Part.)
    - Total or complete Resume documentation (currently needs to be defined in greater depth than what TechReg requires).
    - Applicant provides documentation of previous work performed.
- References:
  - Criteria refer to persons or places with whom or where applicant has worked to provide technical service in the category for which they seek certification.
  - Common Verification Methods:

- Interview customer references about work performed, types of technical services provided, and to verify working relationship.
- May contact appropriate field offices to verify locations identified in reference.
- Obtain letters from customer reference acknowledging work performed, types of technical services provided, and working relationship.

- (2) Verification of TSP Certification Applicants Certified by Recommending Organizations.
  - (i) NRCS has memorandums of understandings (MOUs) with various organizations whose members may have an interest in being TSPs. (See Exhibit 610.81, Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between NRCS and Recommending Organizations, of this Part.) Through these recommending organizations, members may meet complementary criteria necessary for TSP certification.
  - (ii) Criteria met through a recommending organization do not need to be verified by NRCS as the recommending organization takes on that responsibility. Every effort will be made to add the MOU organization as an option to a category and include only criteria that have not already been certified by the MOU organization (See Exhibit 610.88, MOU Recommending Organizations, of this Part.).

## **610.25 Certification Renewal**

A. TSP certifications are in effect for a time period specified by NRCS in the Certification Agreement not to exceed three years and automatically expire unless renewed through application by and approval of NRCS. Refer to 7 CFR Part 652, Subpart C – Decertification for more detail (Exhibit 610.70 & Exhibit 610.71). The reference is located on-line at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-25990.pdf>

B. TSPs can renew their certification in TechReg (<http://techreg.usda.gov/>) by:

- (1) Submitting a complete certification renewal application to NRCS or through a private sector entity, public agency, American Indian Tribe, or approved recommending organization to NRCS at least 60 days prior to expiration of the current certification;
- (2) Providing verification on the renewal form that the requirements of this part are met, and;
- (3) Agreeing to abide by the terms and conditions of a Certification Agreement.

## **610.26 Causes for Decertification**

State Conservationists or Directors, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Areas, in whose States/Territories a TSP is certified to provide technical services, may decertify the TSP for the following reasons:

- (1) Failure to meet NRCS standards and specifications while providing the technical services requested by the participant or USDA.
- (2) Violation of the terms of the Certification Agreement which may include but is not limited to a demonstrated lack of understanding of, or an unwillingness or inability to implement NRCS standards and specifications for a particular practice for which the TSP is certified, or the provision of technical services for which the TSP is not certified.

- (3) Engages in a scheme or device including, but not limited to coercion, fraud, misrepresentation, or providing incorrect or misleading information.
- (4) Any other cause of a serious or compelling nature as determined by NRCS that demonstrates the TSP's inability to fulfill the terms of the Certification Agreement in providing the technical service.

## **610.27 Decertification Process**

### **A. Notice of Proposed Decertification:**

- (1) The State Conservationist or Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area will send, by certified mail, return receipt requested, a written notice of proposed decertification to the TSP proposed for decertification. The notice contains (See Exhibit 610.8, Proposed Decertification Letter, of this Part.):
  - (i) The cause(s) for decertification, and
  - (ii) All documentation supporting decertification.
- (2) When a private sector entity or public agency is being notified of a proposed decertification, any certified individual(s) working under the auspices of such organization who are also being considered for decertification, will receive a separate notice of proposed decertification. The certified individual(s) will be afforded separate appeal rights following the process set forth below.

### **B. Contesting a Notice of Decertification:**

- (1) To contest a proposed decertification notice, the TSP must submit the reasons why the State Conservationist/Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area should not decertify him/her in writing, including any mitigating factors as well as any supporting documentation.
- (2) The written challenge and documentation must be submitted to the State Conservationist within 20 calendar days from the date of receipt of the notice of proposed decertification.

### **C. Determination by the State Conservationist/Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area:**

- (1) The State Conservationist or Area Director will issue a written determination within 40 days of the date of the notice of proposed decertification. A copy of the decision and the administrative record will be sent promptly by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the TSP.
- (2) The decertification determination will be based on an administrative record comprised of:
  - (i) The notice of proposed decertification and all supporting documents, and
  - (ii) The TSP's written response and supporting documentation.
- (3) If the State Conservationist/Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area determines to decertify the TSP, the decision will include (See Exhibit 610.89, Proposed Decertification Letter and Exhibit 610.90, Decertification Letter.):
  - (i) The reasons for the decertification,
  - (ii) The period of decertification, and
  - (iii) The scope of decertification.
- (4) If the State Conservationist or Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area, determines not to decertify the TSP, written notice of the determination will be sent to the TSP.

### **D. Appealing a Decertification Determination:**

- (1) The TSP has 20 calendar days from the date of receipt of the State Conservationist's or Director's, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area, determination to appeal the determination to the Chief of NRCS.
- (2) Any appeal by the TSP must be in writing.
- (3) An appeal of a decertification decision must state the reason(s) for the appeal and any arguments in support of those reasons.
- (4) If the TSP fails to appeal the decertification decision within 20 calendar days of the date of its receipt, the determination of the State Conservationist or Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area, is final.

E. Final Determination by the Chief of NRCS.

- (1) Within 30 calendar days of receipt of the TSP's written appeal, the Chief or his/her designee will make a final determination of decertification. The final determination will be based upon the administrative record and any additional information submitted to the Chief by the TSP.
- (2) The determination of the Chief or his/her designee is final and not subject to further administrative review.
- (3) The Chief's determination will include the reason(s) for decertification or for overturning a decertification determination, and if decertifying the TSP, the period and the scope of decertification.

F. Period of Decertification.

The period of decertification will not exceed three years in duration and will be decided by the decertifying official, the State Conservationist, Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area, or the Chief, as applicable, based on all relevant facts and the seriousness of the reasons for decertification, mitigating factors, if any, and the following general guidelines:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) For failures in the provision of technical service for which there are no mitigating factors, e.g., no remedial action taken by the TSP                                 | A maximum period of three years decertification  |
| (2) For repeated failures in the provision of technical service for which there are mitigating factors, e.g., the TSP has taken remedial action to the satisfaction of NRCS | A maximum period of one to two years decertification; and  |
| (3) For a violation of certification agreement terms, e.g., failure to possess technical competency for a listed practice   | A period of one year or less, if the TSP can master such competency within a period of one year. |

## 610.28 Effect of Decertification

- A. NRCS will not make payment for any technical services provided by a decertified TSP during the period of decertification.
- B. NRCS will not procure the services of a decertified TSP during the period of decertification.
- C. NRCS will maintain a list of decertified TSPs and will remove decertified TSPs from the approved list.

- D. Decertification of a TSP in one State/Territory decertifies the provider in all States, the Pacific Basin Area and the Caribbean Area.
- E. A decertified TSP may apply to be certified in accordance with the certification provisions in this handbook as a new applicant after the period of decertification has expired.

## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart D – Technology, Technological Tools, and Training**

#### **610.30 Availability of Technology and Technological Tools**

A. To the extent practical, NRCS will make technology and technological tools widely available for use by TSPs, through the use of Web- and software-based technology, technological tools and training opportunities. Examples include NRCS the conservation practice standards, electronic Directives system (e.g., policies (including State-level supplements) policies, procedures, instructions, technical notes and releases and user guides), electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), ecological science and engineering software, and numerous other technical tools and references for conservation application, design, evaluation, inventory, planning and reporting of natural resources conservation practices and systems. NRCS may apply fees to specific technology and tools.

B. NRCS will use existing agency policy and guidance for the evaluation and assessment of all new technologies and innovative practices prior to approval and acceptance for use in NRCS administered programs.

- (1) Policy for interim conservation practice standards and variances to national conservation practice standards can be found in Title 450, Technology, of the General Manual, Part 401, Technical Guides, Subpart B, Conservation Practice Standards.
- (2) Policy for field trials is located in Title 450, Technology, of the General Manual, Part 403, Conservation Field Trials.
- (3) The process for developing, reviewing, and approving State-level interim conservation practice standards is included Exhibit 2 of the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP) available through Technical Resources on the NRCS homepage, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

C. NRCS developed an online TSP application and information system called Technical Service Provider Registry (TechReg), accessible at <http://techreg.usda.gov>.

- (1) TechReg is a great source of information that provides detailed instruction for TSPs, general information for landowners, and resource information for NRCS employees and others.
- (2) This Web site is designed to make it easy for TSPs to register, start the certification process, and obtain technical resource information, specifically:
  - (i) News for and about TSPs including the NRCS “TSP Express,” an electronic report for certified TSPs and information for others.
  - (ii) A help section, if TSPs or participants encounter problems with TechReg or just want to find an answer.
  - (iii) A resource section includes:
    - Step-by-step guide to using TechReg,
    - Details about categories of conservation practices;
    - Criteria that qualifies a TSP to be certified;
    - Help in becoming a qualified TSP;
    - An online application for becoming a certified TSP, and
    - Information for participants.

- (iv) Online resources. It includes NRCS policies, procedures, regulations, and other TSP-related technical resources and materials.
- (v) A list of partner organizations that can help you become qualified as a TSP.
- (3) NRCS managers utilize TechReg to manage TSP applications for certifications. NRCS has 60 days to review and verify TSP applications. This may include coordinating with other State-level officials, if a TSP applied for certification in multiple locations.

### **610.31 Technical Service Provider Training**

A. NRCS does not have the resources or authority to provide training to individuals or entities outside of the agency. However, NRCS will work with recommending organizations, academia, American Indian Tribes, other governmental and/or public agencies, such as the Cooperative Extension Service, private sector entities, and others to publicize the availability of training opportunities.

B. NRCS will develop on-line courses that TSPs may take at their own expense to obtain or maintain TSP certification. This includes learning how to access and use NRCS directives, conservation training modules, software and other technological tools available for TSP use.



## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider**

### **Subpart E – Acquisition of and Payment for Technical Services**

#### **610.40 Participant Acquisition of Technical Services**

- A. Participants may select NRCS or a TSP to perform the technical services needed in conjunction with their conservation program contract or agreement.
- B. If a participant enters into a program contract or other agreement with NRCS for use of TSP services and that work is performed in accordance with NRCS standards and program requirements, the participant will, subject to availability of funds, receive payment for the technical services provided up to the amount determined with the not-to-exceed rate by NRCS.

#### **610.41 Not-To-Exceed Rates**

- A. NRCS establishes payment rates by calculating not-to-exceed (NTE) rates for technical services. Initial rates were set by analyzing the amount of time, by NRCS discipline, required to develop a conservation plan or complete the design, installation, or checkout of conservation practices. NRCS will continue to evaluate and update NTE rates, using NRCS technical service data and other pricing information, following a standardized methodology.
- B. NTE payment rates are adjusted by time team region (TTR) within the States and Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas to reflect geographical work hours and labor cost differences for categories of technical services. State Conservationists and the Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas will coordinate payment rates between adjacent States/Areas and TTRs to ensure consistency where similar resource conditions and agricultural operations exist, taking into consideration differences in State-level laws, competition, and other variables.
- C. If a TTR does not have an available NTE rate for a specific practice or practice component for a specific site, then the NTE rate may be established using the rate from another TTR or State/Area where resources, socio-economic conditions, and agricultural operations are comparable.
- D. State Conservationists and the Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas may establish payment rate exceptions to the NTE rates on a case by case basis in response to unusual conditions or unforeseen circumstances in delivering technical services such as highly complex technical situations, emergency conditions, serious threats to human health or the environment, and major resource limitations. These rates must be established, documented, and justified before obligating funds in the program contract.
- E. NTE payment rates can be found at: <http://techreg.usda.gov>. Also, there is an interactive Web site that allows NRCS State-level staff to review and modify proposed new TSP NTE rates when they are released.
- F. Exceptions to the existing NTE rates.
  - (1) An exception to the NTE rate is justified, if one or more of the following criteria are met:
    - (i) There is a one-time, specific need;
    - (ii) NTE rates are not available for a particular practice; and

- (iii) Unique environmental or other natural resource conditions exist and practice implementation is more complex than the typical unit description.
- (2) Some examples of specific situations where an exception is justified include:
  - (i) Presence of threatened and/or endangered species;
  - (ii) Presence of protected historical or archeological sites;
  - (iii) Especially difficult access to a site;
  - (iv) Presence of urban development requiring special practice design; and
  - (v) Lack of in-State/Pacific Basin and Caribbean Area NRCS expertise to accomplish a given task.

G. The NTE rates are currently tied to the Technical Assistance Cost of Conservation Practices (TACCP) database, which contains estimates for time necessary to complete planning, design, installation, and checkout tasks associated with conservation practices.

- (1) These time estimates are applied to an NRCS composite staff cost per hour plus overhead by discipline in order to derive an NTE rate.
- (2) NRCS does not have the authority to pay more than what it would cost NRCS to provide the technical assistance.
- (3) In order to properly document the need for an exception, it is necessary to briefly describe the conditions and list the disciplines that will be involved and the amount of time involved for each discipline. Include only time associated with providing technical assistance or consultative services, not time related to program enrollment and other activities associated with providing financial assistance.

H. To clarify the process, an example and template (in Excel) are contained in Exhibit 610.97, NTE Rates Exception Templates of this Part.

I. Field and State-level staffs must submit requests for TSP NTE rate exceptions to State Conservationists and Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas, for approval. Staff must provide all required information to support requests, including the following:

- (1) Description of need;
- (2) Name of State/Pacific Basin and Caribbean Area and TTR;
- (3) Land use;
- (4) Practice; and
- (5) Tasks, discipline/skill and time estimates (i.e., planning, design, installation, and checkout).
- (6) Other items needed include units (i.e., acre or animal unit), composite-labor-overhead rate by discipline, task element, and practice code. These items are built in and shown as [#N/A] in Exhibit 610.97, NTE Rates Exception Templates of this Part. The government costs, either total or subtotal, are automatically calculated once the hours of work by discipline are entered.

J. State Conservationists/Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas, are to send a copy of the completed form to the NRCS Resource Economics and Social Sciences Division (RESSD), Room 6148-South, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250 within 30 calendar days of completion. The submitted requests will be used for oversight, recordkeeping, and updating the NTE rates.

## **610.42 Use of Subcontractors**

A. TSPs may utilize the services of subcontractors to provide specific technical services or expertise needed by the TSP, provided that:

- (1) The subcontractors are certified by NRCS for the particular technical services to be provided and technical services are provided in accordance with the terms of their Certification Agreement, or
- (2) The TSP is under the provisions of a procurement contract, cooperative or contribution agreement with NRCS. In this instance the subcontractor does not need to be certified but must meet required provisions of the contract or agreement.

B. TSPs using subcontractors that are not certified or do not meet specific provisions of a contract or agreement may be subject to de-certification by NRCS.

#### **610.43 Payment for Technical Services to a Participant**

A. The process for making payments for technical services will be in accordance with the policy specific to the conservation program being utilized.

B. Payment provisions must be included in the participant's program contract prior to the participant employing the services of a TSP, except as provided in Paragraph C., below;

C. A participant, at the discretion of the State Conservationist/Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area, may be paid for TSP technical services incurred prior to entering into a program or contract. State Conservationists/Director, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas, need to review program policy to determine the source of funds to reimburse TSPs in these situations. Program dollars may not be for activities carried out before the contract is funded, which may require that CTA funds be used. These costs include the development of a conservation plan or practice design that may be subsequently incorporated into a program contract or agreement. To be paid for these technical service costs the participant must:

- (1) Enter into a written agreement with NRCS, signed by the participant and the State Conservationist/Director, Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area, or designee, approving payment of these technical service costs not to exceed the approved amount based on the applicable NTE rates before any work is started;
- (2) Meet the requirements specified in the agreement identified in paragraph 1;
- (3) Utilize the services of a certified TSP from the NRCS approved list of TSPs, and;
- (4) Provide NRCS an invoice and related documentation in accordance with the appropriate NRCS Statement of Work for the technical services provided.

D. Payments will not be made for technical services provided by individuals, private sector agencies, American Indian Tribes, public agencies or others that are not certified or that use non-certified subcontractors at the time services were provided.

#### **610.44 Procurement Contracts, Contribution Agreements, and Cooperative Agreements**

A. State Conservationists and the Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas, may utilize procurement contracts, contribution agreements, and cooperative agreements to obtain needed technical or administrative services. These services include planning, design, practice installation, checkout, or support services. State Conservationists/Area Directors will ensure that the allocation of monies in all type of agreements is tied to specific, measurable deliverables. These contracts and agreements will be utilized in accordance with the proper authorities, regulations, policies, and the following guidance:

- (1) Contracts will be solicited and awarded in accordance with applicable Federal, Departmental, and Agency regulations. Individuals, entities and public agencies can bid on federal contracts to provide TSP services, if allowed by law. Requests for

proposals (RFP's) will need to include all information that a public agency, may have access to that could benefit them in the bidding process. In the case of a public agency winning a bid, access to NRCS space and equipment should only be allowed in carrying out the contract requirements if it was a part of the RFP.

- (2) Contribution agreements will be entered into non-competitively. NRCS may pay up to 50% of the cost of the services provided. Public agencies, such as a conservation district, working with NRCS under a contribution agreement should not work as a private sector TSP performing the same services. In such cases, the State Conservationist/Area Director should terminate the contribution agreement.
- (3) Cooperative agreements will be awarded based on competition in accordance with 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3015.158 (d). RFPs will:
  - (i) Be used for all cooperative agreements. Individuals, entities and public agencies can bid on cooperative agreements to provide TSP services, if allowed by law;
  - (ii) Need to include all information that a public agency, may need to benefit from in the bidding process. In the case of a public agency winning a bid, access to NRCS space and equipment should only be allowed in carrying out the contract requirements if it was a part of the RFP. NRCS should discourage conservation districts providing services through a cooperative agreement from providing the same services as a private sector TSP.

B. Conservation districts that operate as a private TSP should remove themselves from any part of a local workgroup meeting where decisions will be made that may affect their interests as a private TSP such as making recommendations for funding of specific practices in which they are certified or under agreement or contract to provide technical services.

#### **610.45 Economy Act Agreements**

A. Economy Act agreements will be utilized with Federal agencies. These agreements shall be in accordance with the Economy Act of 1932, as amended, 31 U.S.C. 1535, and the Federal Acquisition Regulations and related OMB Circulars.

B. Utilize the Economy Act authority when entering into fund obligating agreements with other Federal agencies.

## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart F – Measurement and Accountability System**

#### **610.50 Measurement and Accountability System**

A national NRCS measurement and accountability system will be used to measure and monitor the overall use, performance, and accomplishments of TSPs.

#### **610.51 Performance Results System (PRS)**

A. TSPs are responsible for reporting the technical services they perform. In order to streamline and improve the quality of TSP progress reporting information, all progress reporting will be completed in the Performance Results System (PRS).

B. Public-entity TSPs will use PRS to report their progress using e-authentication log-in procedures. TSPs can access this system through the TechReg Web site at <http://techreg.usda.gov>. Private-entity TSP performance will be entered by NRCS staff. Private-entity TSPs will need to provide the following information to the field office where the land unit is located:

- (1) TSP Name;
- (2) Customer Name;
- (3) Program;
- (4) Location of Work (i.e., State/Pacific Basin Area/Caribbean Area, County, Conservation District, Land Tract Identifier);
- (5) Land Use;
- (6) Practice Name, Amount, and Units; and
- (7) Service Type (i.e., Planning and/or Application).

#### **610.52 Quality Assurance**

A. NRCS is responsible for TSP quality assurance. Agency policy and guidance for review of technical services provided is found in the General Manual, Title 340, Strategic Planning and Budget Analysis, General Manual, Part 404 and Title 450, Technology, General Manual, Part 407.

B. NRCS will respond to technical service concerns or problems when notified of such issues by participants, entities, or other agencies.

C. NRCS will be proactive in identifying and resolving issues in order to proceed with efficient and effective implementation of the TSP process.

D. Quality assurance reviews or spot checks will determine if the technical service provided meets policy, procedures, standards, specifications, and other requirements. In the case that a deficiency is found, NRCS will document the deficiencies found and notify the TSP and participant of the deficiency and specify necessary corrective action to remediate the deficiency within a reasonable period of time. Failure to correct the deficiency in the time frame set by NRCS may trigger the decertification process. If the technical services are a part of a program contract, rules in regard to non-compliance of the program contract will be followed.

E. The procedure for conducting quality assurance reviews or spot checks for technical services provided by TSPs will be addressed in each State-level Quality Assurance Plan. The State Quality Assurance Plan will include more stringent quality assurance safeguards as the magnitude or complexity of the technical services provided increases and as the risk increases for environmental damage and negative environmental impacts from practice failure.

### **610.53 Compliance with Statutory and Regulatory Requirements**

A. The responsible entity or agency will carry out compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and Tribal laws, rules, regulations and local requirements in the course of delivering or receiving technical services to enable NRCS to carry out its responsibilities to comply with resource protection and environmental requirements.

B. NRCS has legal responsibility for all decision-making and consultation required of Federal agencies related to compliance with several resources protection laws, including but not limited to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when the planning and application of a conservation practice may have an impact.

C. TSPs contracted with NRCS to gather information to satisfy compliance with the NHPA will meet the Secretary of Interior's professional qualification standards as specified in Section 112(a)(1)(A) of the Act and in the implementing regulations for section 106 of the NHPA at 800.2(a)(1) and 800.2(a)(3). Such TSPs shall be used in accordance with 800.2(a)(3) ("Use of Contractors").

D. TSPs may work with the participants to help ensure that all approvals, authorities, rights, permits, and easements necessary for the implementation, operation, and maintenance of conservation practices have been obtained prior to practice installation.

## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart G – Appeals and Mediation**

#### **616.60 General Information**

- A. Use NRCS appeals and mediation policy to resolve disputes regarding technical services acquired from TSPs.
- B. For specific guidance, refer to Subpart A, General Information, 610.1, Authorities, USDA Regulations, and NRCS Policies, Procedures, and Guidance, Paragraph D, Authorities and Related Regulations for Appeals and Mediation.

#### **616.61 Reserved**

## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart H – Technical Assistance Waste, Fraud, and Abuse**

#### **610.70 Zero Tolerance**

NRCS has a zero-tolerance policy regarding waste, fraud, and abuse. TSPs who engage in waste, fraud, and abuse will be subject to the decertification process and other penalties as allowed by law.

#### **610.71 Instructions for Contacting the USDA Office of Inspector General**

All NRCS offices will prominently display instructions for contacting the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Investigative Branch, to aid a NRCS employee and/or program participant in making appropriate contact(s) in reporting an act(s) of waste, fraud, and abuse. The USDA OIG Web site is <http://www.usda.gov/oig/>.

#### **610.72 Erroneous Representation Affecting Program Determination**

A. Any person who NRCS determines to have erroneously represented any fact affecting a program determination made in implementing the program shall not be entitled to any payment and shall refund all prior payments received.

B. NRCS State Conservationists and Directors, Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas, Director will ensure that each case of suspected fraud involving an employee, program participant, or TSP, is turned over to the USDA OIG, Investigative Branch.



## **Part 610 – Technical Service Provider Handbook**

### **Subpart I – Exhibits**

#### **610.80 Technical Service Provider Assistance Final Rule (7 CFR Part 652)**

A. Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107–171, May 13, 2002 (2002 Farm Bill), provides for delivering technical assistance to a producer directly or through a payment for an approved third party. The legislation calls for establishing a system for approving individuals and entities to provide technical assistance and for establishing the amounts and methods for payments for that assistance. The TSP Assistance Final Rule (7 C.F.R. 652) outlines that system.

B. The following pages provide a mirror copy of the Federal Register issuance. This issuance is also available online at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-25990.pdf>.

## 610.81 Technical Service Provider Certification Agreement

By signing this Certification Agreement, I (insert name of individual, Private Sector Entity, American Indian Tribe or Public Agency) agree to the terms set forth below, which are required for certification as a technical service provider. I understand that certification for specific categories of technical service by the USDA qualifies me to provide technical services to Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 program participants and the USDA. Certification does not constitute federal employment or any other legal relationship with the federal government nor does it entitle me to any special benefits or rights (Exemption is American Indian Tribe because USDA does have a trust. Further, I understand that I am not a certified technical service provider until the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): (1) determines that my certification application meets the requirements for certification set forth in 7 CFR Part 652, (2) signs this Certification Agreement, and (3) includes my name on the approved list of technical service providers.

### **I. Certification Terms.**

**A. USDA Standards and Specifications.** I am familiar with and agree to meet all applicable USDA standards, specifications, and program requirements as set forth in USDA guides, handbooks, and manuals for the technical services I provide.

**B. Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations.** I agree to comply with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal and local laws and requirements for the technical services I provide, including but not limited to, 7 CFR part 652. I further agree that I must be familiar with any unique criteria required at the county level for particular conservation practices or technical services before providing technical services in a particular county. I acknowledge that I must be aware of these local criteria and agree to familiarize myself with any such criteria by contacting the appropriate NRCS State official before providing technical services.

**C. Warranty of Work Quality.** I agree to represent in writing on each plan or other technical service document submitted to USDA or the program participant that the technical services rendered: (1) comply with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws and requirements, (2) meet applicable USDA standards, specifications, and program requirements, (3) are consistent with and meet the particular conservation program goals and objectives for which the program agreement or contract was entered into by the program participant or USDA, respectively, and (4) incorporate, where appropriate, low-cost alternatives that address the resource issues.

**D. Liability.** I assume all legal responsibility for the technical services I provide, and I understand that the USDA shall have no responsibility or liability for the technical services I provide.

**E. Quality Assurance.** I agree to submit to quality assurance reviews by the USDA or its agents of the technical services I provide, including providing any documentation requested by the USDA related to my provision of technical services.

**F. Reporting and Documentation.** I will develop and maintain documentation of the technical services I provide, including invoices, in accordance with USDA manuals, handbooks, and technical guidance and furnish this documentation to the local USDA Service Center office and the program participant when the particular technical service is completed. I will report technical service accomplishments into the NRCS electronic tracking system at the time the technical services are completed.

**G. Licensing Requirements.** I will maintain, for the period of this certification, any licensing or similar qualification standards established by Federal, State, or Tribal law that I identified in my Application for Certification and/or that are required for the type of technical services I provide.

**H. Duration of Certification, Cessation of Services, and Renewal Requirements.** I acknowledge that my certification as a technical service provider is for a term of three (3) years from the date NRCS first signs this Certification Agreement. I will cease providing services as a technical service provider

immediately upon the expiration of the NRCS certification, the lapse of any applicable licensing or similar qualifications standards, or the effective date of being decertified. If I wish to renew my certification as a technical service provider, I will submit an application for certification renewal at least 60 days prior to the expiration of this certification.

**I. Civil Rights.** I agree that, in providing technical services, I will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. I further agree that if I am providing technical services as a private-sector entity that I will meet all Federal requirements as an equal opportunity employer. This includes administering policies and practices that are designed to prevent discrimination against any qualified employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. This policy of nondiscrimination applies to all employment practices, including hiring, compensation, benefits, promotion, training, and termination.

**J. Disclosure of OnLine Information.** I agree that the personal information (excluding private information like Social Security Number) I enter into my application for certification will be available on-line for public access. I understand that program participants seeking the services of a Technical Service Provider will have access to this information as well as other members of the public that access the Technical Service Provider TechReg Web site.

## **II. Additional Terms Applicable to Private Sector Entity or Public Agency.**

In addition to the terms set forth above, (insert name of private sector entity / public agency) agrees to the following terms:

**A. Certified Individual.** (Insert name of private sector entity / public agency) will have, at all times, an individual who is a certified technical service provider authorized to act on its behalf.

**B. Changes to List of Certified Individuals.** (Insert name of private sector entity / public agency) will promptly provide to NRCS an amended Certification Agreement for NRCS approval whenever there is a change in the identity of the certified individuals working under its auspices.

**C. Work Performed by Entity or Agency.** I agree that all work performed by non-certified individuals employed by (Insert name of private sector entity / public agency) will be assumed and verified by a certified individual authorized to act on behalf of the (Insert name of private sector entity / public agency).

**D. Work Performed.** I agree that all work performed by non-certified individuals will be assumed and verified by a certified individual authorized to act on behalf of the (Insert name of entity).

**E. Responsibility for Individuals Performing Work under Auspices.** (Insert name of private sector entity / public agency) assumes all legal responsibility for the work performed by an individual working under its auspices.

This agreement is entered into under the authority of 16 U.S.C. 3842.

I am signing this agreement as \_\_\_\_\_ an individual, or on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ a private-sector entity, or on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian Tribe, or on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ a public agency (please check one).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

180 – Technical Service Provider Handbook

Mailing Address\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone and Facsimile Number\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ State Conservationist, NRCS \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Title

Date

For specific State Technical Service Provider information, contact the appropriate NRCS State Technical Service Provider Contact listed on the TechReg Web site.

Based on the above signature, this agreement will expire on \_\_\_\_\_.

**For Private Sector Entity, American Indian Tribe or Public Agency:** List the certified individuals authorized to act on your behalf (use additional pages as necessary). Individuals must have a current NRCS certification in each State in which your organization plans to provide technical services:

Name of Certified Individual	Date of Certification	Categories and States where Certified
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## **610.82 Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between NRCS and Recommending Organizations**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**BETWEEN THE**  
**(INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME)**  
**AND THE**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into between the (INSERT NAME) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### **I. BACKGROUND**

NRCS is responsible for providing technical assistance to land owners and operators in protecting soil, water, and related resources under the provisions of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended 16 U.S.C. 590 (a-f), and other applicable legislation. This legislation authorizes NRCS to cooperate with various Federal agencies, State and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals in order to carry out its responsibilities and further the conservation mission of NRCS on private lands in a voluntary, scientifically-based manner.

In addition to the technical assistance available from NRCS, USDA conservation program participants have the option of obtaining conservation technical assistance from individuals certified as Technical Service Providers (TSPs) by NRCS.

Section 2701 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 Farm Bill, Public Law 107-171, May 13, 2002, amended Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to require the Secretary to provide technical assistance under Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 to a program participant “directly, or ... through a payment ... for an approved third party, if available.”

Section 1242 also requires the Secretary to establish a system for approving individuals and entities to provide technical assistance to carry out programs under this title including criteria for the evaluation of providers or potential providers of technical assistance.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING ORGANIZATION/TRIBE)

### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a general framework for cooperation between (INSERT NAME) and NRCS for the purpose of recommending individuals for possible NRCS certification. Through this MOU, (INSERT NAME) may submit recommendations to NRCS of individuals who meet the (INSERT NAME) certification program standards, and NRCS may consider such individuals for certification as technical service providers. It is the intent of both parties that this cooperative effort shall be for the mutual benefit of each party as well as program participants who wish to avail themselves of technical services provided by certified Technical Service Providers.

This MOU recognizes that a person who has met the standards set by (INSERT NAME) meets the NRCS performance proficiencies for providing conservation assistance in the technical service category of (INSERT SPECIFIC CATEGORY).

This MOU will mutually benefit NRCS and (INSERT NAME) by providing an opportunity for professionals recommended by (INSERT NAME) to become certified by NRCS as a Technical Service Provider. This will assist NRCS in carrying out its mission of providing quality conservation technical assistance to its customers.

NRCS will place those recommended individuals whom it certifies as TSPs on the approved list to provide technical service in selected categories to USDA conservation program participants. Program participants may select TSPs from that list, thereby expanding the scope of services to existing and future clientele.

### III. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Recommending Organization (INSERT NAME) will:

1. Provide a written assurance to NRCS that the individuals that it recommends for certification as a Technical Service Provider meet the minimum NRCS performance proficiencies for providing conservation assistance in the technical service category of (INSERT SPECIFIC CATEGORY);
2. Establish and maintain a registry of individuals who meet the (INSERT NAME) qualifications to provide conservation technical assistance in the technical service category identified in A.1. The registry will include a list of services each individual is qualified to provide. The registry will contain the following information:
  - a) Name of individual
  - b) Company (if applicable)
  - c) Address
  - d) Phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable
  - e) Skill area(s)
  - f) Service area(s)
  - g) (INSERT NAME) as the recommending organization.
3. Update all information on its registry monthly, or more frequently if necessary, and provide this information to NRCS in a mutually acceptable electronic format.
4. Remove individuals from the registry who do not maintain required levels of training within the 3-year timeframe or who are found to be providing substandard assistance from its registry and immediately notify these individuals and NRCS;
5. Notify recommended members in a timely manner when technical and programmatic materials are available from NRCS to ensure that the highest quality of conservation technical assistance is available;
6. Upon request and with agreement from all parties involved, provide NRCS with a list of courses individual used to fulfill continuing education requirements;
7. Inform members that all providers to be certified by NRCS must complete a Certification Agreement as a condition of their certification by NRCS as a Technical Service Provider;
8. Inform members certified as Technical Service Providers by NRCS that they are subject to the same annual quality reviews as NRCS employees; and

9. Inform members that, if certified as Technical Service Providers by NRCS that they cannot legally certify completed cost shared practices for payment. Only NRCS employees have the legal authority to do so.

B. NRCS will:

1. Advise (INSERT NAME) of the knowledge, skills, and proficiencies an individual will need to possess to qualify for Technical Service Provider designation for each of the technical service categories identified in this MOU;
2. Periodically review (INSERT NAME) certification standards for consistency with NRCS criteria for technical services covered by this MOU;
3. Provide (INSERT NAME) with access to current program information and appropriate technical reference documents for use by Technical Service Providers. Such documents will include manuals and standards and specifications for appropriate conservation practices;
4. Provide the approved list of Technical Service Providers to USDA offices;
5. Assist in suggesting training opportunities for (INSERT NAME) members, provide training materials when available, and serve as a resource when practicable; and
6. Notify (INSERT NAME) and remove Technical Service Providers from the approved list through the decertification process if it is determined that the Technical Service Provider has failed to meet the terms and conditions of the Certification Agreement.

C. Both Parties will:

Meet as requested by either party to review progress and discuss methods of improving this process.

#### IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. This MOU takes effect upon the signature of NRCS and (INSERT NAME) and shall remain in effect for (INSERT) years from the date of execution unless amended or terminated as set forth herein. This MOU may be extended or amended upon written request of either NRCS or (INSERT NAME) and the subsequent written concurrences of the other. Either NRCS or (INSERT NAME) may terminate this MOU with a 30-day written notice to the other.

B. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create, any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

C. Termination of this agreement will not affect individuals certified as Technical Service Providers by NRCS. Certified individuals will continue to be listed on the approved list of Technical Service Providers in accordance with the terms and conditions of their certification.

D. NRCS and (INSERT NAME) and their respective officers will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including expenditures of their own funds in pursuing the purposes of this MOU. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.

E. None of the information in this MOU shall obligate either USDA or (INSERT NAME) to obligate or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of USDA and (INSERT NAME) will require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of funds. Such activities must be independently

authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

F. Employees of NRCS shall participate in efforts under this MOU solely as representatives of the United States. To this end, they shall not participate as directors, officers, employees, or otherwise serve or hold themselves out as representatives of, (INSERT NAME). They also shall not assist (INSERT NAME) with efforts to lobby Congress, or to raise money through fund-raising efforts. Further, NRCS employees shall report to their immediate supervisor any negotiations with (INSERT NAME) concerning future employment and shall refrain from participation in efforts regarding such parties until approved by the agency.

G. All activities under this agreement will be in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D).

H. In accordance with NRCS Property Management Regulation, Temporary Regulation A-2, "The program or activities conducted under this memorandum of understanding will be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-259); and other nondiscrimination statutes: namely, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. They will also be in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR 15, Subparts A & B), which provide that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency hereof."

## V. TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

### A. (NAME OF ORGANIZATION)

NAME  
TITLE  
ADDRESS  
PHONE/FAX:  
E-MAIL ADDRESS

### B. NRCS

Lawrence E. Clark  
Deputy Chief for Science and Technology  
Room 5006 South Building  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Phone: (202) 720-4630  
Fax: (202) 720-7710  
e-mail: lawrence.clark@wdc.usda.gov

## VI. AUTHORITY

NRCS enters into this agreement under the authority of section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3842.



VII. APPROVAL

The undersigned parties hereby agree to the terms and conditions specified above.

BRUCE I. KNIGHT Chief  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

DATE

NAME  
President  
Name of Organization

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME  
Chair, Certification Board  
Any Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## 610.38 Terminology Example from TechReg

Category	Options	Criteria
Grazing/Forages		State Date: 3/1/2003 ; End Date: Animal Trails and Walkways (575); Brush Management (314); Fence (382); Firebreak (394); <del>Forage Harvest Management (511); Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548); Heavy Use</del> Area Protection (561); Pasture and Hay Planting (512); Prescribed Grazing (528A); Range Planting (550); Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645); Use Exclusion (472); Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644);
	Grazing Option 1 - SRM Certification	<u>Grazing SRM Certification</u> : Hold a current certification as Certified Range Management Consultant by Society for Range Management(SRM).
	Grazing Option 2 - AgCertification	<u>Agronomic Certification</u> : Have a current certification by an agronomic or related professional organization. <u>Conservation Planning NRCS Training Modules 1-5</u> : Complete modules 1 through 5 of NRCS Conservation Planning course. Anyone can take the first 5 modules of the Conservation Planning Course, self-paced, off of the Internet. The web site for the course is: <a href="http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html">http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html</a>
	Grazing Option 3 - Experience	<u>Conservation Planning NRCS Training Modules 1-5</u> : Complete modules 1 through 5 of NRCS Conservation Planning course. Anyone can take the first 5 modules of the Conservation Planning Course, self-paced, off of the Internet. The web site for the course is: <a href="http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html">http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html</a> <u>Grazing Experience</u> : 5 Years experience in planning, design, layout, inspection, or managing Grazing/Forages practices associated with this category. <u>Grazing References</u> : Provide two locations or customer references where technical service has been provided that can verify your experience and proficiency planning, designing, installation/layout, and checkout of Grazing/Forages practices.
	Grazing Option 4 Education	<u>Conservation Planning NRCS Training Modules 1-5</u> : Complete modules 1 through 5 of NRCS Conservation Planning course. Anyone can take the first 5 modules of the Conservation Planning Course, self-paced, off of the Internet. The web site for the course is: <a href="http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html">http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html</a> <u>Grazing Education</u> : Bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, agriculture, or other plant science and 1 years of experience and knowledge successfully planning, design, layout, or managing Grazing/Forage practices associated with this category. <u>Grazing References</u> : Provide two locations or customer references where technical service has been provided that can verify your experience and proficiency planning, designing, installation/layout, and checkout of Grazing/Forages practices.
	Grazing Option 5 - NAICC Certification	<u>Conservation Planning NRCS Training Modules 1-5</u> : Complete modules 1 through 5 of NRCS Conservation Planning course. Anyone can take the first 5 modules of the Conservation Planning Course, self-paced, off of the Internet. The web site for the course is: <a href="http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html">http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/consplan.html</a> <u>Grazing Experience or Education</u> : 5 Years experience in planning, design, layout, inspection, or managing Grazing/Forages practices associated with this category or Bachelor or higher

## 610.84 State License-Engineers: Texas Web-Site

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying `http://www.tbpe.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/NewSearch/get.cgi?db=rpe`. The page header for the Texas Board of Professional Engineers includes the address "1917 IH 35 South, Austin, Texas 78741" and phone/fax numbers "1-512-440-7723" and "1-512-442-1414". A navigation menu contains links for General, Board, Complaints, Enforcement, Firms, Exams, Licensing, Links, P.E., Search (highlighted in red), E-Mail, and Home. Below the menu is the heading "Search Active Licensed Professional Engineers".

**Note:** This database listing contains current Active and Inactive Licensed Professional Engineers only. It does not contain delinquent or expired licensees.

**Active Status:** Currently renewed and eligible to practice engineering in Texas.  
**Inactive Status:** Currently renewed and not practicing engineering in Texas.

**Search By:**




**Search For:**

**2nd Field To Search By:**

**2nd Keyword To Search For:**

Branch indicates the field of engineering selected at the time of licensure. This may not indicate the type of engineering service the Professional Engineer is currently conducting. Use the following abbreviations to search by branch: A/A, AGR, ARC, BIO, CHE, CTV, CRM, CSE, ELE, ENV, ESG, FIR, GEO, IND, MAN, MEC, MET, MIN, NUC, OCE, OTH, PET, SAN, SDE, STR.

## 610.85 State License-Engineers: Illinois Web-Site

Address  <https://www.ildpr.com/licenselookup/results.asp>  Go  Links >>

**Daniel Bluthardt, Acting Director** **Professional Regulation** **Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor**

[Start a New Search](#) [Printer Friendly View](#)

SEARCH FOR LICENSEE BY PROFESSION:  
**Engineer Professional, Licensed**  
 THERE ARE 1 RECORDS WHOSE NAME CONTAINS: **D Seibel**

Licensee's Name	DBA / AKA	License Number	License Status	City, State	Original Date	Current Exprtn	Ever Disciplined?
DOUGLAS C SEIBEL		62034731	ACTIVE	FORT WORTH, TX		11/30/2005	N



**[1]**


Express Access License Look-Up has been approved for use as a primary source for verification by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

If the "Ever Disciplined" field contains a "Y," there has been disciplinary action taken against this license. Click on the "Y" to view details of the disciplinary action. If you wish to view comprehensive reports in Adobe Acrobat format for disciplines that occurred after September 1996, click [HERE](#). The Illinois Department of Professional Regulation publishes a monthly report detailing disciplinary action taken by the Department. Each Disciplinary Report is a listing of all licensees disciplined by the Department within a given month. The information includes the name of the disciplined professional, the city where he/she was practicing at the time of action, the discipline imposed and a brief description of the reason for the discipline. All [Monthly Disciplinary Reports](#) are accurate on the date of issuance or initial date of publication. However, disciplinary actions may be subject to further court orders that may stay, affirm, reverse, remand or otherwise alter Department disciplinary orders. Please note that discipline that has been stayed or reversed will not appear in the summary of discipline.

## 610.86 ASA Certification Registry Web-Site

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 [Shop Online](#)  
 [Contact us](#)



The Premier Certifications in Agronomy, Crop and Soil sciences

<a href="#">Home</a>
<a href="#">Contacts</a>
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<a href="#">Certification Registries</a>
<a href="#">Update your address</a>
<a href="#">CEU Reporting Form</a>
<a href="#">Agronomy/Soils Logo</a>
<a href="#">Agronomy/Soils Complaint Investigation Procedures</a>
<b>Certifications</b>
<a href="#">CCA Program</a>
<a href="#">Agronomy</a>
<a href="#">Soil Science</a>
<b>Links of Interest</b>
<a href="#">ASA</a>
<a href="#">CSSA</a>
<a href="#">SSSA</a>

### Public Registries

- [Certified Professional Soil Scientist \(CPSSc\)](#)
- [Certified Professional Agronomist \(CPAg\)](#)
- [Certified Professional Soil Classifiers \(CPSC\)](#)

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[American Society of Agronomy](#) | [Soils Science Society of America](#) | [Crop Science Society of America](#)

## 610.87 Wildlife Society Certification Registry Web-Site

Address  [http://www.wildlife.org/professional/index.cfm?tname=searchpage&searchon=last\\_name&nmc=no](http://www.wildlife.org/professional/index.cfm?tname=searchpage&searchon=last_name&nmc=no)  Go [Links](#) >>



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**Search the Certification Registry**

**Certified Wildlife Biologists by Name - GRAY (3)**

Gray, Brian T.	Oak Hammock Marsh, MB Canada	CWB
Gray, Patrick Brian	Campbellsville, KY	CWB
Gray, Randall L.	Arlington, VA	CWB

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Search by Name:

Last Name:  
(complete or partial, e.g.,  
"Smith" or "Smi")

## 610.88 Sample Interview Questions

### **Relevant Accreditations/Licenses:**

Q: How long have you been a certified or licensed as a \_\_\_\_\_? Please e-mail or mail a copy of your certification/license. (Use this question, when you cannot verify a license via the internet.)

### **Education/Training:**

Q: You list a degree in agronomy from \_\_\_\_\_ University. What soils, agronomy, and biology courses did you take while in college. Please submit a copy of your transcripts showing courses taken and grades achieved.

Q: You list Irrigation Systems Training on your application to satisfy the criteria in the Irrigation Systems category. Do you have an agenda/synopsis for the course you listed? Does it list the individuals, agency, or business teaching the course?

### **Relevant Work Experience:**

Q: In the last 5 years as a CCA, approximately how many landowners did you provide technical services for in the following areas: Irrigation Water Management; Conservation Crop Rotation; Residue Management; Nutrient Management; and Pest Management? Would you mail a copy of the most recent IWM and Nutrient Management plan you developed?

Q: As a range consultant, what type of grazing systems did you design for your clients? What methodology did you use to determine rangeland health, livestock/forage balance or carrying capacity, and monitoring?

Q: As a PE, how many AFOs/CAFOs have you worked with in this State? What practices did you plan, design, and checkout? What tools did you use to determine your land treatment practices?

### **Professional References:**

Q: Do you have letters of reference from the two professional references listed on your application? Please send me these letters by e-mail, regular mail, or by facsimile..

### **Familiarity with NRCS Guidelines, Criteria, Standards, and Specifications:**

Q: What have you done and how long have you done it to gain 5 years of experience and knowledge in planning, design, layout, inspection (of which NRCS practice standard(s))?

Q: Do you know where to locate the NRCS Statements of Work, standards and specifications for the categories and conservation practices you list on your application?

Q: As a CCA, you develop nutrient management plans. Can you provide me with a copy of the nutrient management plan you developed for \_\_\_\_\_ Farms, whom you list as a reference? What risk assessment tools have you used to determine nitrogen or phosphorus leaching potential?

## **610.89 Memorandum of Understanding Recommending Organizations**

The following are organizations with whom NRCS has entered into a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) to help facilitate the TSP certification process. Under each organization is a list of certification requirements that applicants must possess/supply in order to obtain the organization's certification. If the organization's certified list contains the TSP applicants' names, then the organization has already verified this information. NRCS should not have to validate this information as part of the verification process.

**A. American Society of Agronomy (Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg))**

- (1) Education—at least a BS in agricultural related degree
- (2) If a BS, at least 5 years of field experience
- (3) If a MS, at least 3 years of field experience
- (4) If a PhD, at least 1 year of field experience
- (5) Document education and experience with transcripts and supporting references
- (6) Pass one comprehensive examination
- (7) To maintain certification, 40 hours Continuing Education Units (CEUs) every two years

**B. American Society of Agronomy (Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSSc/CPSC))**

- (1) Education—at least a BS, including transcripts
- (2) If a BS, at least 5 years of field experience
- (3) If a MS or PhD, at least 3 years of field experience
- (4) Documents education and experience with transcripts and supporting references
- (5) Pass two comprehensive examinations
- (6) To maintain certification 40 hours, CEUs every two years

**C. American Society of Agronomy (Certified Crop Advisor (CCA))**

- (1) If a BS in agriculture, at least 2 years of field experience
- (2) If no degree, at least 4 years of field experience
- (3) Documents education and experience with transcripts and supporting references
- (4) Pass two comprehensive examinations
- (5) To maintain certification, 40 hours CEUs every two years

**D. Society for Range Management (Certified Range Management Consultant)**

- (1) Education—at least a BS in range management
- (2) If a BS, at least 10 years of experience in range management
- (3) If a MS, at least 8 years of experience in range management
- (4) If a PhD, at least 6 years of experience in range management
- (5) Applicant must supply certified transcripts, record of employment, list of publications and consulting reports, and four recommendations

**E. Society for Range Management (Certified Professional in Rangeland Management (CPRM))**

- (1) Education—at least a BS in range management or closely related field
- (2) Complete, with at least a "C" average, a list of rangeland courses
- (3) If a BS, at least 5 years of experience in rangeland management
- (4) If a MS or PhD, at least 3 years of experience in rangeland management



- (5) Supply three references one of which must be a CPRM
- (6) Supply a list of users/professional the applicant has worked for/with to show experience
- (7) Pass one examination
- (8) To maintain certification, 32 hours CEUs every two years

F. Iowa State University's (ISU) certified Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) course (Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage Certification)

- (1) Complete ISU CNMP course and pass the manure and Wastewater handling and storage examination
- (2) Complete NRCS Conservation planning modules 1-5 (Supply copy of score or certificate.)
- (3) Complete NRCS Field Office Tech Guide modules (Supply copy of score or certificate.)
- (4) Review the elements of a CNMP as contained in NRCS technical guidance
- (5) Complete NRCS Agricultural Waste Management System Level 2 course (Supply certificate.)
- (6) To maintain certification, 6 hours of CEUs every three years

G. Iowa State University's (ISU) certified CNMP course (Nutrient Management Certification)

- (1) Complete ISU CNMP course and pass the Nutrient Management examination
- (2) Complete NRCS Conservation planning modules 1-5 (Supply copy of score or certificate.)
- (3) Complete NRCS Field Office Tech Guide modules (Supply copy of score or certificate.)
- (4) Review the elements of a CNMP as contained in NRCS technical guidance
- (5) Complete the NRCS Introduction to Water Quality Course (Supply a copy of certificate.)
- (6) Complete the Nutrient Management portion of the NRCS Nutrient Management and Pest Management Considerations in Conservation Planning (Supply a copy of certificate.)

H. Iowa State University's (ISU) certified CNMP course (Land Treatment Practices Certification)

- (1) Complete ISU CNMP course and pass the Land Treatment Practices examination
- (2) Complete NRCS Conservation planning modules 1-5 (Supply copy of score or certificate.)
- (3) Complete NRCS Field Office Tech Guide modules (Supply copy of score or certificate.)
- (4) Review the elements of a CNMP as contained in NRCS technical guidance
- (5) Have competence in applying Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE)

I. The Wildlife Society (Certified Wildlife Biologist)

- (1) Education—BS, BA or higher degree in biology, wildlife or related field of study
- (2) If a bachelor's degree, 5 years experience within the last 10 years
- (3) If a master's degree, 4 years of experience
- (4) If a PhD, 3 years experience
- (5) If both a master's and a PhD, then 2 years experience
- (6) Document education and experience with official transcripts, work history and supporting references

J. The Irrigation Association (Certified Irrigation Designer (CID))

- (1) At least 1 year of education in an irrigation related field or 1 year of irrigation related experience
- (2) Complete the Irrigation Industry examination
- (3) Complete the General Agriculture examination after having 3 years of experience and completion of Irrigation Industry examination
- (4) Complete Specialty examination(s) in Drip/Micro, Sprinkler and/or Surface

K. The Irrigation Association (Certified Agricultural Irrigation Specialist (CAIS))

- (1) Complete an Agricultural Irrigation Specialists training course and pass examination
- (2) To maintain certification, 10 hours CEUs every year

L. National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (Certified Professional Crop Consultants (CPCC))

- (1) Education–BA or BS in agricultural discipline (at least 10 years as a crop consultant
- (2) With a non-agricultural degree may petition
- (3) If a bachelor's degree, 6 years experience providing crop management recommendations
- (4) If a master's degree, 5 years experience providing crop management recommendations
- (5) If a PhD degree, 4 years experience providing crop management recommendations
- (6) Pass either a state specific licensing examination, state or regional CCA examination, or if these are not available pass the national CCA examination
- (7) Submit a case study
- (8) Submit names of five clients
- (9) To maintain certification, 36 CEUs per year

M. Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester

- (1) Education–bachelors or masters from a SAF accredited school or bachelors or masters from a non-SAF accredited school which is substantially equivalent
- (2) If a bachelor's degree at least 5 years of qualifying professional forestry related experience
- (3) If a master's degree at least 4 years of qualifying professional forestry related experience
- (4) If a PhD degree, at least 3 years of qualifying professional forestry related experience
- (5) If both a masters and a PhD, at least 2 years of qualifying professional forestry related experience
- (6) Pass a certification examination
- (7) To maintain certification, 30 CEUs every three years

N. Association of Consulting Foresters of America (ACF)

- (1) Education—at least a BS degree in Forestry from an approved college
- (2) Minimum of 2 years experience in practical forestry administration, management or other special forestry classifications
- (3) Must be owner or partner of a forestry consulting firm, or salaried employee in one owned by an ACF member

O. American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS)

- (1) Education—at least a BS in one of the Animal Sciences
- (2) If an BS, 4 years of relevant professional experience
- (3) If an MS, 2 years of relevant professional experience

- (4) If a PhD, 1 year of relevant professional experience
- (5) Pass a written examination
- (6) Supply 2 references of completed Feed Management practice
- (7) To maintain certification, 15 CEUs per year

P. American Fisheries Society (Fisheries Professional Certified, FP-C)

- (1) Education—at least a Bachelors degree in Biology with fishery aquatic sciences courses
- (2) If a bachelor's degree, 5 years of fulltime experience
- (3) If a master's degree, 4 years of fulltime experience
- (4) If a PhD degree, 2 years of fulltime experience
- (5) Document education and experience with official transcripts, work history and supporting references
- (6) To maintain certification a complicated point system for professional development

Q. American Forage and Grasslands Council (AFGC)

- (1) Completion of a bachelor's degree in Agronomy, Soils, Animal Science, Natural Resources, Range Science, or closely related fields.
- (2) Completion with a grade of "C" or better in the following subjects: a) plant physiology, b) basic soil science, c) principles of forage production, d) principles of biology, e) basic animal science, f) animal nutrition, or g) principles of agriculture economics
- (3) Certified Grassland Professionals will be required to meet the minimum continuing education requirements of 32 CEUs during the 2-year certification period.
- (4) At least five years of full-time, experience is required.
- (5) Passing score of at least 75% on the comprehensive written examination
- (6) Furnish three letters of reference, at least two of which must be from professionals in the field of forage, range, or pasture management.
- (7) Furnish a list of five or more forage or grassland management professionals or land users, and contact information, for which they worked during the five or more years of qualifying experience.

R. Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC)

- (1) Earn a BS degree or higher in engineering (agricultural, civil, or environmental), geology, soil science, natural resource science or management, or a related field is acceptable.
- (2) Three (3) years of professional level experience in the soil erosion and sediment control profession - college transcripts are required. The time requirement for professional level experience may be reduced by obtaining in-training status.
- (3) Complete seven (7) years or more of professional level experience in the erosion and sediment control profession. The time requirement for professional level experience may be reduced by obtaining in-training status.
- (4) Through the professional experience profile, references, and written examination, the applicant must demonstrate an ability to observe, evaluate, and synthesize information; to consider alternatives; and to propose appropriate recommendations in a clear, logical manner.
- (5) International applicants must provide documentation to assure that educational degrees obtained and work experience. Qualification under a delegated program (e.g., CPESC - Australia) meets this requirement.

S. Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPSWQ)

- (1) Each applicant must successfully pass a written examination designed to determine proficiency in the principles, practices, and legislation of storm water quality.
- (2) Earn a BS degree\*, plus six (6) years of professional level experience\*\* in the storm water quality profession.
- (3) Earn a MS degree\*, plus four (4) years of professional level experience\*\* in the storm water quality profession.
- (4) Earn a PhD degree\*, plus two (2) years of professional level experience\*\* in the storm water quality profession.
- (5) Attain certification as a CPESC (Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control)
- (6) Through the professional experience form, references, and written examination, the applicant must demonstrate an ability to observe, evaluate, and synthesize information, to consider alternatives, and to establish appropriate recommendations in a clear and logical manner.
- (7) International applicants must provide documentation to verify that educational degrees and work experience.

Degrees in hydrology, engineering ( agricultural, civil, environmental, or chemical ),

\* landscape architecture, geology, soil science, natural resources management, or a related field are acceptable.

\*\* Professional level experience is defined as working in a profession where approximately 75% of professional time is spent in the relevant field.

## 610.90 Proposed Decertification Letter - Template

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
<Applicable State Office>  
<Street Address>  
<City, State, Zip Code>  
Telephone: < > FAX: < > Email: < >

November 1, 2004

BY CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Text for Proposed Decertification Letter (TSPs)

[address box]

Re: Notice of Proposed Decertification

Dear [Technical Service Provider name]:

By this letter, and in accordance with 7 CFR 652, Subpart C-- Decertification, we are proposing to decertify you as a technical service provider based upon my determination that causes for decertification exist under 7 CFR §652.32(a) and (b).

Specifically, on October 1, 2004, NRCS completed a quality assurance review on the technical services you provided to John Doe under your contract with Mr. Doe to design, install, and checkout Mr. Doe's waste storage pond. Mr. Doe was acquiring your technical services in accordance with Mr. Doe's [agreement/contract number] with NRCS. NRCS's review of your design found several items that did not meet NRCS standards and specifications, which resulted in the installation of a waste storage pond that was not constructed in accordance with our standards and specifications. In addition, the field sheets you were responsible for completing during checkout incorrectly reflected that the structure was built to NRCS standards. Furthermore, despite being notified of these deficiencies by NRCS, you have failed to take any action to remedy these deficiencies. Copies of the documents supporting the causes of decertification are attached to this letter.

To contest this proposed decertification, you must submit to our office, in writing, within 20 calendar days from the date of receipt of this Notice, any reasons why you should not be decertified, including any mitigating factors and any supporting documentation. Within 40 calendar days from the date of this Notice of Proposed Decertification, we will issue a written determination whether to decertify you based upon the administrative record before me.

Please refer to and review 7 CFR 652, Subpart C, which is available on line at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-25990.pdf> for additional information regarding the decertification process, including deadlines and appeal rights. A copy is attached for your information.

Decertification results in a technical service provider's name being removed from the list of certified technical service providers for a period of up to three years. If you have any questions regarding this Notice of Proposed Decertification, please contact me at [enter telephone number].

Sincerely,

State Conservationist

## 610.91 Decertification Letter - Template

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
<Applicable State Office>  
<Street Address>  
<City, State, Zip Code>  
Telephone: <   >  
FAX: <   >  
Email: <   >

November 1, 2004

BY CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Text for Decertification Letter (TSPs)

[address box]

Re: Notice of Decertification

Dear [Technical Service Provider name]:

By this letter, and in accordance with 7 CFR 652, Subpart C-- Decertification, we are decertifying you as a technical service provider based upon my determination that causes for decertification exist under 7 CFR §652.32(a) and (b).

The cause(s) for decertification were set forth in the Notice of Proposed Decertification, dated [insert date]. We have reviewed the administrative record, which includes the reasons and supporting documentation you provided to contest the proposed decertification. Based upon the administrative record, we decertify you for a period of [insert period of decertification].

The basis for the [ ] year(s) decertification period is that you made no attempt to remedy the deficiencies identified during the quality assurance review conducted by NRCS on [insert date] and because there was a serious failure on your part in the provision of technical services. This period of decertification is in accordance with 7 CFR part 652.37 (a).

You have the right to appeal this decision to the Chief of NRCS. Your appeal must be made in writing within 20 calendar days from the date of receipt of this Decision. Your appeal must state the reasons(s) for the appeal and any arguments in support of your appeal. If you fail to appeal this Decision within 20 calendar days of receipt, then this decision is final.

Within 30 calendar days of receipt of any appeal from you, the Chief of NRCS will make a final determination of whether to decertify, based on the administrative record and any additional information that may be submitted. The determination by the Chief is final and cannot be appealed further.

Please refer to and review 7 CFR 652, Subpart C, which is available on line at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-25990.pdf>.

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For additional information about the decertification process, including deadlines and appeal rights. A copy of the regulations was previously provided to you.

Sincerely,

[insert name]  
State Conservationist

Attachment  
(Administrative record to be provided to National TSP Team Leader)

## 610.92 Statements of Work Templates

For use, in modified form, by NRCS State and Pacific Basin/Caribbean Area offices and related guidance.

**A. Background.** TSPs, NRCS personnel, producers, and partners have requested clear guidance on the specific products and deliverables required for each category of technical assistance performed by TSPs. To respond to these requests, NRCS leadership assembled a team, representing each region in NRCS, to develop national Statements of Work templates for each technical service category contained in TechReg. These Statements of Work outline deliverables for all 157 conservation practice standards in the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP), as well as for comprehensive nutrient management plan development, conservation planning, and cultural resources compliance activities.

The national Statements of Work templates are intentionally broad in scope and serve as generic models that may be modified by States and the Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas (hereinafter referred to as States) as they develop deliverables and performance requirements for actual TSP work. They are designed to be modified or tailored at the State or local level. State-tailored Statements of Work for all the categories of TSP work may be developed by modifying these national templates. Modification may simply be adoption of the national templates with the headings changed to identify the State, State contacts, and date of posting or appropriate tailoring of the national templates for the state use area(s). Additionally, States may decide to develop their own independent statements of work.

The National Technical Guide Committee endorsed the placement of these State-modified Statements of Work in Section IV of the eFOTG. Another folder titled Statements of Work will be added to Section IV. The State-modified Statements of Work should be added to that folder.

**B. Explanation.** NRCS State Conservationists and Director of the Caribbean Area:

- May elect to modify and adapt the national templates or develop their own statement documents to meet the specific needs within their intended-use area. At a minimum, State Conservationists/Directors may elect to adopt the national Statements of Work and simply change the heading to reflect the State, State contacts, and date of posting;
- Are in all cases to place their State name, State contact information, and the date of posting as the heading for each individual Statement of Work; and
- Are to post the Statements of Work documents, as modified or created, along with the attached guidance document, in the eFOTG Section IV folder titled Statements of Work.

**C. Attachments.** Attached are links for national Statements of Work templates, in zipped format, along with the guidance associated with the State-modified Statements of Work. For the link (depress ctrl key and click left mouse key) or go to the web and enter the URL.

- [Attachment A – Guidance for Use of TSP Statements of Work](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB_450_4_6_a.rtf)  
[http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB\\_450\\_4\\_6\\_a.rtf](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB_450_4_6_a.rtf)
- [Attachment B – TSP Statements of Work Templates](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB_450_4_6_b.zip)  
[http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB\\_450\\_4\\_6\\_b.zip](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB_450_4_6_b.zip)



## 610.93 Verification Check Sheets

A. This sheet is used to verify the license and certification requirements.

TSP ID	TSP Name
Date	Reviewer:

**List States/Pacific Basin or Caribbean Areas in which the TSP is requesting certification:**

**1. Relevant Accreditation/Licenses:** License or certification used to meet TechReg criteria.

Technical Service Category	Documented in TechReg?	Certification Description	Official Expiration Date	NRCS Verified?
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

**2. Certification requirements:** Is a State/Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area or local certification (not listed as TechReg criteria) required for any of the categories and states that this TSP has documented his/her certification?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, complete the following table with appropriate State/Pacific Basin or Caribbean Area or local certification. **If TSP is requesting certification in additional State/Pacific Basin/Caribbean Area, forward to State(s) for verification of required State-level licenses, permits, etc.**

Technical Service Category	Documented in TechReg?	State	Certification Description	Official Expiration Date	NRCS Verified?
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

If no, comments:

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B. This sheet is used to document verification of the education and training requirements necessary for certification.

TSP ID	TSP Name
Date	Reviewer:

**1. Education as required by TechReg criteria:** Education can be verified by a copy of a diploma, transcript, certificate of training, etc.

Technical Service Category	Documented in TechReg?	Education Description	NRCS Verified?
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

**2. Training as required by TechReg criteria:** Training can be verified by a copy of a certificate of training, or contacting training organization or agency, etc.

Technical Service Category	Documented in TechReg?	Training Description	NRCS Verified?
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

C. This sheet is used to document verification of the experience and reference requirements.

TSP ID	TSP Name
Date	Reviewer:

**1. Experience as required by TechReg criteria:** Experience can be verified by contacting references, local field office knowledge, interview or documentation of prior work such as an agricultural waste design, etc.

Technical Service Category	Documented in TechReg?	Experience Description	NRCS Verified?
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

**2. References as required by TechReg criteria:**

- a. Were the references able to verify the TSPs experience? Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐
- b. Were the references able to verify the TSPs qualifications? Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐
- c. Is the applicant currently de-certified in any State? Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐
- d. Has the applicant signed a certification agreement? Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐

Comments:

## 610.94 Michigan Quality Assurance Procedure for TSP Certification

A. Review 100% of certifications by Michigan residents through TechReg.

B. Criteria review:

- (1). Ensure listed qualifications are consistent with criteria (e.g., degree subject):
  - (a) Check location (should be Michigan);
  - (b) Print out TSP profile details from TechReg (need to login) NOT resume – need to keep printout;
  - (c) Use “Quality Assurance Review of TSP Certification” form to check all selected options to ensure that required licenses, education, training, and references are listed in B-F.
    - Do not review experience and familiarity with NRCS guidelines, etc., at this time); and
  - (d) Note missing or inadequate qualifications under “comments.”
    - Need better definition on “provide locations or customer references”
- (2). Confirm that the qualification is valid.
  - (a) Certification:
    - (i) Check for current certifications via the Web;
    - (ii) Contact certifying organization via telephone or e-mail; and
    - (iii) Request proof of current certification from TSP.
  - (b) Training:
    - (i) Check with National Employee Development Center? (Was the course self-paced or an automated test?);
    - (ii) Check list from training organization – Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning course, Module 7; and
    - (iii) Request proof from TSP.
  - (c) Education: request proof from TSP.
  - (d) License:
    - (i) Check for current license via Web;
    - (ii) Contact licensing organization via telephone or e-mail; and
    - (iii) Request proof of current license from TSP.
  - (e) Knowledge (Check during certification Q/A?)
  - (f) Experience (Check during certification Q/A?)
  - (g) References (Check during certification Q/A?)

C. Contact the TSP if you encounter any problems, such as:

- (1) TSP’s qualifications do not match criteria (Send a letter giving 15 days to remove name from category, correct qualifications, or risk being decertified.)
- (2) TSP’s qualifications match criteria, but have not been able to verify (Send a letter giving 15 days to submit verification of qualifications or risk being decertified.)

**610.95 Michigan Quality Assurance Review Check Sheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location (in Michigan): \_\_\_\_\_

Description	Listed by TSP	Required by Criteria	Comments
<b>Relevant Accreditations/Licenses</b>			
Conservation Planning State Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
NAICC Crop Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN CNMP <b>Plan Devel</b> Land Treatment Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN CNMP <b>Plan Devel</b> MWHS Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN CNMP <b>Plan Devel</b> Nutrient Mgt Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN CNMP Land Treatment Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN CNMP MWHS Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN CNMP Nutrient Mgt Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Engineers License – State	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nutrient Mgt. – State Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
EMS CNMP LCC Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Univ TN Total Plan Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cultural Resources and/or Archaeological Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Professional Animal Scientist Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Forestry Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Certified Range Mgt Consultant (SRM)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Agronomic Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ASA CCA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ASA CPSSc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ASA CPCSc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ASA CPAg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pest Mgt license - State	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wildlife Biologist Certification – The Wildlife Society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Professional Wetland Scientist – Society of Wetland Scientists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Biology or other ecological sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Certified Fisheries Biologist AFS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wildlife Mgt, fisheries science or related sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Description	Listed by TSP	Required by Criteria	Comments
<b>Education and Training</b>			
Cons Planning Modules 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cons Planning Modules 1-9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
NRCS Approved training CNMP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
NRCS Cultural Resources 1-8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Forestry or related plant science degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Agronomy, agriculture or related plant science degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Agronomy, soil science, crop science horticulture or related fields in nutr mgt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
History (BA), Archaeology (MA), Anthropology (MA), Architectural History (MA), Art History (MA), Historic Preservation (MA), Architecture, or closely related field	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Animal Waste Level 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Animal Waste Level 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nutrient & Pest Mgt Course NRCS 1-7 Nutr Track	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nutrient & Pest Mgt Course NRCS 1-7 Pest Mgt Track	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Relevant Work Experience</b>			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>References</b>			
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Familiarity with NRCS Guidelines, Criteria, Standards, and Specifications:</b>			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 610.96 Michigan TSP Registry Category

available on web			Not accepted in Michigan			
Tech Reg category	Number (as of 1/26/04)	Option	Certification	Training	Education	License
<b>CNMP Plan Approval</b>	<b>19</b>					
		1 - CP certification	current certification from NRCS approved training for states serviced			
		2 - Knowledge		CP Modules 1-9 or an equivalent		
		3 - NAICC Certification	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-9 or an equivalent		
<b>CNMP Plan Development - Feed Management</b>	<b>5</b>					
		1		15 hours during next 3 years		
<b>CNMP Plan Development - Land Treatment</b>	<b>8</b>					
		1 - knowledge		NRCS approved course		
		2 - Univ TN	Univ of TN CNMP Land treatment element cert			
<b>CNMP Plan Development - Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage</b>	<b>7</b>					
		1 - knowledge		NRCS approved course		(engineers license not required by MI law)
		2 - Univ TN	Univ of TN CNMP MWHS element cert			(engineers license not required by MI law)
<b>CNMP Plan Development - Nutrient Management</b>	<b>8</b>					
		1 - knowledge		NRCS approved course		(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		2 - Univ TN	Univ of TN CNMP Nutrient Mgt element cert			(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
<b>CNMP Plan Development - Total Plan</b>	<b>10</b>					
		1 - knowledge		CP modules 1-5 CNMP Plan Development AWMS Level 2 Intro to WQ (or ASA cert) Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Nutrient track (or ASA cert)		(engineers license not required by MI law)
		2 - EMS LLC cert	EMS CNMP Total Plan Cert			(engineers license not required by MI law)
		3 - Univ TN cert	Univ of TN CNMP cert in all specialty areas			(engineers license not required by MI law)
<b>Certified Conservation Planner (Current)</b>	<b>13</b>					
		1 - certification	current certification from NRCS approved training for states serviced			
		2 -		CP Modules 1-9 or an equivalent		
		3 - NAICC Certification	NAICC crop certification			
<b>Channel and Streambank Stabilization</b>	<b>8</b>					
		1		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Contaminate Reduction Control</b>	<b>4</b>					
		1		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Cultural Resources Compliance Studies</b>	<b>2</b>					
		1		CP Modules 1-5 Cultural Resources modules 1-8	Meet Secretary of Interiors Prof Qual Standards & Guidelines	(permit not required by Michigan law for private lands)
<b>Feed Management</b>	<b>0</b>					
<b>Forestry/Agroforestry</b>	<b>5</b>					
		1 - certification	by a forestry or related organization	CP Modules 1-5		
		2 - experience		CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor or higher in forestry or related plant science	

## 610.96 Michigan TSP Registry Category

available on web		Not accepted in Michigan				
Tech Reg category	Number (as of 1/26/04)	Option	Certification	Training	Education	License
<b>Grazing/Forages</b>	<b>9</b>					
		1 - SRM cert	Cert Range Mgt Consultant for Range Mgt (SRM)			
		2 - Ag Cert	current certification by an agronomic or related prof org	CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - experience		CP Modules 1-5		
		4 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor or higher in agronomy, ag, or other plant science	
		5 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5	5 yrs exp or bachelor in agronomy, ag or other plant science	
<b>Irrigation (Water Conveyance)</b>	<b>5</b>					
		1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Irrigation System (Application)</b>	<b>4</b>					
		1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Irrigation Water Management</b>	<b>4</b>					
		1 - Ag Cert	current certification by an agronomic or related prof org	CP Modules 1-5		
		2 - experience		CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor or higher in agronomy, ag, or other plant science	
		4 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5	5 yrs exp or bachelor in agronomy, ag or other plant science	
<b>Land Shaping</b>	<b>6</b>					
		1		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Land Shaping (PE Not Required)</b>	<b>6</b>					
		1		CP Modules 1-5		
<b>Land Treatment - Buffer</b>	<b>16</b>					
		1 - Ag Cert	current certification by an agronomic or related prof org	CP Modules 1-5		
		2 - experience		CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor or higher in agronomy, ag, or other plant science	
		4 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5	5 yrs exp or bachelor in agronomy, ag or other plant science	
<b>Land Treatment - Surface Water Management</b>	<b>7</b>					
		1		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Land Treatment - Tillage and Erosion</b>	<b>27</b>					
		1 - CCA	CCA cert			
		2 - CPSSC	CPSSC cert			
		3 - CPCSc	CPCSc cert			
		4 - CPAg	CPAg cert			
		5 - cert	Current cert by agronomic or related prof org	CP Modules 1-5		
		6 - experience		CP Modules 1-5		
		7 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor or higher in agronomy, ag, or other plant science	
		8 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5	5 yrs exp or bachelor in agronomy, ag or other plant science	
<b>Land Treatment - Vegetative Land Stabilization</b>	<b>11</b>					
		1 - certification	Current cert by agronomic or related prof org	CP Modules 1-5		
		2 - experience		CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor in agronomy, ag or other plant science	
		4 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5	5 yrs exp or bachelor in agronomy, ag or other plant science	



## 610.96 Michigan TSP Registry Category

available on web		Not accepted in Michigan				
Tech Reg category	Number (as of 1/26/04)	Option	Certification	Training	Education	License
<b>Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage</b>	<b>10</b>	1 - experience		Animal Waste Level 1 Animal Waste Level 2 CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
		2 - Univ of TN	Univ of TN cert in CNMP MWHS element			engineer's license
		3- EMS cert	EMS CNMP Total Plan Cert			engineer's license
<b>Nutrient Management - Organic and Inorganic (Current)</b>	<b>24</b>	1 - CCA	CCA cert			(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		2 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5 Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Nutrient track		(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		3 - CPAg	CPAg cert			(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		4 - CPSSc	CPSSc cert			(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		5 - State cert			BS degree in agronomy, soil sci, crop sci, hort, or related fields	nutrient mgt state cert
		6 - education		CP Modules 1-5 Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Nutrient track		(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		7 - experience		CP Modules 1-5 Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Nutrient track		(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		8 - Cert Univ TN	Univ of TN cert in CNMP Nutr Mgt element	Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Nutrient track		(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
		9 - EMS cert	EMS CNMP Total Plan Cert	Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Nutrient track		(nutrient mgt state cert not required in MI)
<b>Pest Management</b>	<b>16</b>	1 - CCA	CCA cert			
		2 - CPAg	CPAg cert			
		3 - CPCSc	CPCSc cert			
		4 - CPPP	CPPP cert			
		5 - State license		CP Modules 1-5 Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Pest track		pest mgt applicator license
		6 - NAICC cert	NAICC crop certification	CP Modules 1-5 Nutr & Pest Mgt Considerations 1-7 Pest track		pest mgt applicator license
<b>Prescribed Burning</b>	<b>1</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		(state cert not required in MI)
<b>Reservoir Sealing</b>	<b>6</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Soil Stabilization for Access (Roads)</b>	<b>7</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Surface Water Detention/Retention</b>	<b>9</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Waste Utilization - Energy Generation (Current)</b>	<b>2</b>	1 -				engineer's license
<b>Waste Utilization - Feedstock for Livestock (Current)</b>	<b>1</b>	1 -	Cert Animal Scientist			
<b>Water Conveyance (Pipelines)</b>	<b>6</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Water Management (Drainage)</b>	<b>7</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Water Supply Facilities</b>	<b>7</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Water Well</b>	<b>6</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Well and Shaft Technology</b>	<b>4</b>	1 -		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license

## 610.96 Michigan TSP Registry Category

available on web		Not accepted in Michigan				
Tech Reg category	Number (as of 1/26/04)	Option	Certification	Training	Education	License
<b>Wetlands (Interdisciplinary) Biological Components</b>	<b>9</b>					
			cert as wildlife biologist by The Wildlife Society or prof wetland scientist by the Society of Wetland Scientists	CP Modules 1-5		
		1 - certification				
		2 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor in biology or other ecological sciences	
<b>Wetlands (Interdisciplinary) Engineering Components</b>	<b>8</b>					
		1 - engineers license		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Wetlands with Engineering Required</b>	<b>8</b>					
		1 - engineers license		CP Modules 1-5		engineer's license
<b>Wildlife and Fisheries (New)</b>	<b>0</b>					
		1 - Wildlife Biologist	cert as wildlife biologist by The Wildlife Society	CP Modules 1-5		
		2 - Fisheries Biologist	Certified Fisheries Biologist by the American Fisheries Society	CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor in wildlife mgt, fisheries science, or other related sciences	
<b>Wildlife and Fisheries Interdisciplinary Biological (New)</b>						
		1 - Wildlife Biologist	cert as wildlife biologist by The Wildlife Society	CP Modules 1-5		
		2 - Fisheries Biologist	Certified Fisheries Biologist by the American Fisheries Society	CP Modules 1-5		
		3 - education		CP Modules 1-5	bachelor in wildlife mgt, fisheries science, or other related sciences	
<b>Wildlife and Fisheries Interdisciplinary Engineering (New)</b>	<b>3</b>					
		1 - engineers license				engineer's license

### **610.97 Not-To-Exceed (NTE) Rates**

Justifying exceptions to TSP NTE rates.

The following links contain to an example and a template (in Excel) to support requests from Field and State-level staffs requests for TSP NTE rate exceptions.

Depress the ctrl key and click the left mouse or go to the web and enter the URL.

- [Attachment A – Example Format  
http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB\\_450\\_5\\_6\\_b.xls](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB_450_5_6_b.xls)
- [Attachment B – Blank Format http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB\\_450\\_5\\_6\\_c.xls](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/NB/NB_450_5_6_c.xls)

## 610.98 Technical Service Provider Assistance Employee Fact Sheet



# Technical Service Provider Assistance

Information for NRCS Employees

## *Fact Sheet*

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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

June 2005

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The 2002 Farm Bill amended the 1985 Farm Bill, which authorized use of technical service providers (TSPs), by requiring the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow producers to receive technical assistance by individuals and entities other than NRCS. This provision is designed to ensure NRCS has the capacity to address the significant workload associated with implementing Farm Bill programs. Technical Service Provider Assistance is another tool for NRCS to use in the implementation of conservation programs.

### What is a TSP?

A Technical Service Provider is an individual, entity (private or nonprofit business), or public agency. TSPs must be competent to perform technical services and their qualifications certified by NRCS. The TSP will be placed on an approved list of providers and selected by a producer or selected by NRCS through a procurement contract, contribution agreement or cooperative agreement.

TSPs provide technical services in most aspects of conservation, including conservation planning, design, layout, installation, and check-out of approved conservation practices.

All TSPs must perform services according to NRCS conservation practice standards and specifications. Therefore, there is an application process.

### Technical Service Registry (TechReg)

NRCS developed an online application and information system called Technical Service Provider Registry (TechReg). The web site can be accessed from the internet at the following location: <http://techreg.usda.gov>.

TechReg is a great source of information for NRCS Employees plus it provides detailed instruction for TSPs.

TechReg is designed to make it easy for TSPs to register, start the certification process, and obtain technical resource information. It contains **news** for and about TSPs including the TSP Express, a newsletter prepared by NRCS. There is a **help** section if you encounter problems with TechReg or just want to find an answer. The **resource** section includes: 1) step-by-step guide to using TechReg, details about categories of conservation

practices; 2) criteria that qualifies a TSP to be certified; 3) help in becoming a qualified TSP; and 4) an online application for becoming a certified TSP. Finally, there is a section of **online resources**. It includes NRCS policy, regulations, and other technical material related to TSP. There is also a list of partner organizations that can help you become qualified as a TSP.

State Conservationists and TSP Coordinators utilize TechReg to manage TSP applications for certifications. NRCS has 60 days to review and verify TSP applications. This may include coordinating with other states if a TSP applied for certification in multiple locations.

### Who Guides TSP Assistance

The State Conservationist or Caribbean/Pacific Basin Area Director designated a TSP Coordinator to address policy concerns and questions about technical provider assistance at the local level.

A national office team is responsible for developing policy and procedures to integrate technical service provider assistance into the NRCS way of doing business. They collaborate with program managers and technical specialists throughout NHQ to integrate this resource tool into all aspects of NRCS farm bill programs. Also, they support short term details to aid with the TSP Assistance Process development. The National TSP Team is headed by a National Coordinator and is assigned to the Science and Technology Deputy Area. The TSP Team is comprised of a Team Leader, Natural Resources Specialist, Management Analyst, and Clerical assistant.

District Conservationists and field personnel will likely encounter TSPs if they have been hired by a producer. TSPs may need access to resource information and related conservation plan information that the landowner could not provide. Likewise, landowners who hire TSPs may request assistance from the field office when completing payment request packages. It is a good practice to become familiar with TSPs within your county.

The field office will often be the first contact for potential TSPs. There are several preliminary steps that a potential TSP must complete in order to apply for

certification. These steps include:

- Obtain eGov account online
- Visit the field office to get eGov level2 account
- NRCS employee certifies eGov level2 account of potential TSP
- NRCS employee inputs potential TSP into SCIMS (if they are not already in SCIMS)
- NRCS employee links SCIMS and eGov account
- Potential TSP logs into TechReg and completes on-line application for TSP certification
- NRCS certifies/defers TSP application
- Once certified, TSP provides technical services

### **TSP Information For NRCS Employees**

TechReg is a great source of information for NRCS Employees. In addition the National TSP Team holds quarterly teleconferences with TSP Coordinators to disseminate information and address concerns.

The TSP Final Rule was released in November 2004. It outlines the basic requirements for NRCS policy to implement TSP Assistance. A copy is posted on TechReg.

TSP Assistance Policy is in the NRCS electronic Directives System. The TSP Manual replaces the technical assistance section of the Conservation Programs Manual which formerly referred to TSPs as third party vendors. A TSP Handbook outlines most of the procedures that TSP Coordinators have helped to refine. Copies of these documents are available on the NRCS electronic Directives System and on TechReg Web sites.

For more information on the technical service provider process, please contact the Leader, National TSP Team, Angel Figueroa at 202-710-6731 or e-mail at [angel.figueroa@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:angel.figueroa@wdc.usda.gov).

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## 610.99 Technical Service Provider Assistance Provider Fact Sheet



# Technical Service Provider Assistance

## Fact Sheet

## Provider Information

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

June 2005

The 2002 Farm Bill amended the 1985 Farm Bill, which authorized use of technical service providers (TSPs), by requiring the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow producers to receive technical assistance by individuals and entities other than NRCS. This provision is designed to ensure NRCS has the capacity to address the significant workload associated with implementing Farm Bill programs. This fact sheet will help you the TSP to effectively offer assistance.

### What is a TSP?

A Technical Service Provider is an individual entity (private or nonprofit business), or public agency. TSPs must be competent to perform technical services and their qualifications certified by NRCS. The TSP will be placed on an approved list and selected by producers or selected by NRCS through a procurement contract, contribution agreement or cooperative agreement.

TSPs provide technical services in most aspects of conservation, including conservation planning, design, layout, installation, and check-out of approved conservation practices.

All TSPs must perform services according to NRCS conservation practice standards and specifications. Therefore, there is an application process.

### Resource Assistance for TSPs

NRCS developed an online application and information system called Technical Service Provider Registry (TechReg). The Web site can be accessed from the internet at the following location: <http://techreg.usda.gov>.

TechReg is a great source of information that provides detailed instruction for TSPs

TechReg is designed to make it easy for TSPs to register, start the certification process, and obtain technical resource information. It contains **news** for and about TSPs including the TSP Express, an

electronic report prepared by NRCS. There is a **help** section if you encounter problems with TechReg or just want to find an answer. The **resource** section includes: 1) step-by-step guide to using TechReg, details about categories of conservation practices; 2) criteria that qualifies a TSP to be certified; 3) help in becoming a qualified TSP; and 4) an online application for becoming a certified TSP. Finally, there is a section of **online resources**. It includes NRCS policy, regulations, and other technical material related to TSP. There is also a list of partner organizations that can help you become qualified as a TSP.

NRCS managers utilize TechReg to manage TSP applications for certifications. NRCS has 60 days to review and verify TSP applications. This may include coordinating with other states if a TSP applied for certification in multiple locations.

### Applying to become a certified TSP

Individuals must complete the on-line application in TechReg. You will need to obtain an eGov online account. There are several preliminary steps that a potential TSP must complete in order to apply for certification. These steps include:

- Visit the field office to get eGov level2 account
- NRCS employee certifies eGov level2 account of potential TSP
- NRCS employee inputs potential TSP into SCIMS (if they are not already in SCIMS)
- NRCS employee links SCIMS and eGov account

The potential TSP can now log into TechReg and complete the on-line application for TSP certification. This will require you to provide information about your qualifications, and select the technical services you wish to provide along with the locations where you want to provide these services. You may return to an incomplete application at any time. You will also sign a certification agreement that indicates your information is accurate and that you will abide by NRCS policy and regulations.

Businesses do not apply for certification. Instead, a certified individual may identify their entity. Prospective clients may look-up businesses as well as individuals when searching for TSPs. NRCS will review your application and verify that it meets NRCS requirements for certification within 60 days. If there is a problem, we will advise you and allow time for you to make corrections. If NRCS approves your application, you will electronically sign a Certification Agreement with NRCS. This grants you certification and places you on the list of approved TSPs.

### **Training to satisfy certification requirements**

NRCS has Web-based training available including Conservation Planning - Part I (0019) and Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide (0149). These courses may be required for certification in several conservation category areas. You may access and register for the courses at: <http://elearning.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. Users should register with their USDA account in order to claim credit for completing them.

Recommending organizations also partner with NRCS to offer training that may lead towards NRCS certification in selected practice areas.

NRCS plans to post training course listings on TechReg and often lists training opportunities in the TSP Express. NRCS will launch a TSP Orientation Course by the end of FY-2005.

### **Performing Work as a TSP**

TSPs can be hired to provide assistance in two ways. They are hired directly by the producer or by a contractual arrangement with NRCS. In FY 2004, NRCS obligated \$48.6 million for technical services of which 20% was for direct producer-hired contacts and 80% from agency contractual arrangements.

TSPs must market their own services to producers for direct hire. They may also respond to NRCS advertisements in [FedBizOpps](http://www.fbo.gov) (<http://www.fbo.gov>) and [FedGrants](http://www.fedgrants.gov) (<http://www.fedgrants.gov>) for NRCS contracts. Both of these Web sites offer automated notification systems and extensive details about the technical service needed.

Producers can locate certified TSPs listed in TechReg. Certified TSPs agree to a mutually acceptable contract. NRCS shares the cost of technical services with the producer. The maximum amount of this

payment depends on the scope of services, extent of the practices involved, and the location for the work. NRCS defines these amounts as “Not to Exceed” (NTE) rates.

NTE rates, based on NRCS’ costs for completing the same tasks, are updated annually on October 1. If the scope of services cost less than the computed NTE rate, then NRCS’ payment will equal the invoiced amount. If the work costs more, producers must cover the additional costs. TechReg lists NTE rates

### **Payment for Services as a TSP**

NRCS contracts and agreements document how payments are made including reporting progress. If you contracted with a producer, you will need to report the work completed and submit an invoice with expenses to the producer. The producer may request that NRCS pay you directly by completing an assignment of payment request. Delays can occur with this payment method since a vendor code (requiring the social security number or business tax id of the vendor) must be established in the NRCS payment system. The vendor code must be established and entered by the NRCS national headquarters office.

NRCS will make payment within thirty days of receiving a complete payment request package demonstrating that the services provided met all legal, technical, and programmatic requirements. Electronic payments will be made to via direct deposit.

### **Who is responsible if something goes wrong or the practices fail?**

Your agreement or contract requires that the services you provide comply with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws; as well as USDA standards and specifications. You assume legal responsibility for the technical services you provide including any costs, damages, claims, liabilities, or judgments arising from past, present, or future negligent or wrongful acts or omissions in connection with technical services you provided. Conservation practices that failed due to no fault of yours or the producer could be eligible for reapplication in accordance with the appropriate USDA program.

Program participants bear the responsibility for obtaining all approvals, authorities, rights, permits, and easements necessary for implementation,

operation, and maintenance of each conservation practice prior to installation. However, TSPs typically work with producers to secure these items.

For more information please contact your local USDA Service Center.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5974 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



**610.100 Technical Service Provider Assistance Producer Fact Sheet**

# Technical Service Provider Assistance

*Fact Sheet**Producer Information***USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service****June 2005**

The 1985 Farm Bill first authorized use of technical service providers (TSPs), while the 2002 Farm Bill included additional language which requires the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide technical assistance through many conservation programs to a producer eligible for that assistance "directly ... or at the option of the producer, through a payment ... to the producer for an approved third party [TSP], if available." This fact sheet will help you, the producer, benefit from this assistance.

**Why does the technical service provider process exist?**

The public's interest in, and the government's financial commitment to conservation have reached historic levels. NRCS and our locally-led partners are committed to delivering services quickly and efficiently, without hiring additional staff. NRCS aspires to fulfill this commitment by engaging a new workforce of certified professionals from the private sector, non-profit organizations, and public agencies.

**Who are TSPs and what may they do?**

TSPs are individuals qualified to provide technical assistance on behalf of USDA. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a USDA agency, manages this effort. Technical assistance includes conservation planning, design, installation, and checkout of approved conservation practices. USDA will defray some or all of your costs if you select a private consultant or public agency from the list of certified TSPs and the technical services provided meet all legal, programmatic, and technical requirements.

**Why would a producer elect to obtain service from a TSP?**

The wait for technical assistance from NRCS, due to prior commitments and workloads, may take longer than you would prefer. Using a certified TSP provides

producers with greater flexibility. With numerous TSPs available, you should get the technical assistance you need when you need it.

**What assurances do I have that a TSP would perform to my standards and those of NRCS?**

To ensure high quality assistance, TSPs available for your selection must qualify for certification based on their education, experience, and other credentials deemed necessary by NRCS to adequately practice in their areas of expertise.

TSPs have signed a certification agreement attesting to the validity of their credentials and application. The agreement assigns responsibility for their work to the TSP and requires the TSPs' work meet NRCS standards. NRCS will conduct regular, random, reviews of the technical services performed by TSPs to assess quality and integrity. Poor performance or record falsification may result in decertification. The certification agreement appears on the TechReg Web site (<http://techreg.usda.gov>). Look for the section titled "In the Spotlight" and then click on "View the Technical Service Provider Certification Agreement."

**How do I obtain technical assistance from a TSP?**

Producers who wish to use a TSP and receive payment from NRCS must hold a program contract. After you indicate your interest in using a TSP, you and NRCS will modify your program contract.

State conservationists have the option to authorize the use of a TSP to deliver conservation planning for those without farm bill program contracts. If you do not have a program contract and would like a TSP to prepare a conservation plan to help you apply for a program contract, ask your District Conservationist if your state offers this service.

You, the program participant, bear the responsibility

to select, hire through your own contract, and pay the TSP. Your District Conservationist can provide you with a list of the certified TSPs by category for your county. You can also find the same information on the TechReg Web site (<http://techreg.usda.gov>) by clicking on “Find a Technical Service Provider” in the left column. You will find a resume’ for each TSP to assist you in your selection.

### **How much will the services of a TSP cost me?**

Depending on the work planned, the services of a TSP may cost you nothing. The modification to your program contract will include the maximum amount NRCS will pay you, given a scope of services, extents for the practices involved, and location for the work. NRCS has termed these amounts “Not to Exceed” (NTE) rates. NTE rates, based on NRCS’ costs for completing the same tasks, get updated annually on October 1. Should the scope of services cost less than the computed NTE rate, NRCS’ payment to you will equal the invoiced amount. If the work costs more, you must cover the additional costs. Preview the NTE rates applicable to your location and needs on the TechReg Web site (<http://techreg.usda.gov>). Look for the link in the section titled “In the Spotlight.”

### **How will I receive payment for the technical assistance provided by a TSP?**

You must submit documentation of the work completed, evidence that the work was reported into NRCS’s progress reporting system, and an invoice in accordance with your program contract modification.

NRCS may make a payment directly to your TSP if you complete an assignment of payment request. Your local District Conservationist should have copies of this form.

NRCS will make payment within thirty days of receiving a complete payment request package. Electronic payments take less time than preparing a paper check.

### **Who is responsible if something goes wrong, or the assistance provided is inadequate?**

In accordance with their certification agreement, TSPs assume all legal responsibility for the technical services they provide, including any costs, damages, claims, liabilities, and judgments arising from past, present and future negligent or wrongful acts or omissions in connection with technical services provided. Conservation practices that failed due to no fault of the program participant or the TSP would be eligible for reapplication in accordance with the applicable USDA program.

Although program participants bear the responsibility for obtaining all approvals, authorities, rights, permits, and easements necessary for implementation, operation, and maintenance of the conservation practice prior to installation, TSPs typically work with the program participants to secure these items.

### **How do I indicate that I want NRCS to take care of my technical service needs?**

The 2002 Farm Bill did not alter the process for acquiring technical assistance from the Department. Participants should start by contacting their local USDA Service Center. The District Conservationist will schedule the technical assistance in accordance with the district’s current commitments and workload. Where current commitments and workloads preclude timely delivery of technical assistance, the NRCS State Conservationist may procure services from TSPs through a contract or agreement. If this occurs, you will not enter into a contractual relationship with a TSP. NRCS will coordinate access to your records, land, and facilities through you.

For more information on the technical service provider process, please contact your local USDA Service Center.

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## 610.101 Notice to Participant Regarding TSP Assistance – Template

(Participant Name)

[insert date]

Address

RE: Authorization for Technical Service Provider Assistance

File Code: [insert]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

You have selected to use a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) to provide technical services regarding (*spell out services to be provided, reference applicable agreement, contract, contract items, etc*).

You are responsible for selecting a TSP from the NRCS approved list of those that have been certified to provide the assistance for the above-listed practices. You can obtain a list of certified TSPs by accessing the TSP Web site at <http://techreg.usda.gov>. You can also review résumés of the TSPs by:

1. Selecting technical service provider on the left side of the screen,
2. Click on the State map,
3. Click on the county map, and
4. Check the resume of the TSP.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the work performed by your TSP is in accordance with all Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws and ordinances. Concerns that may be identified during the application of the individual practices or other technical service must be brought to the attention of NRCS before proceeding with the installation. Some examples are: The National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Threatened and Endangered Species Act, and Clean Water Act (404 permits).

The enclosed Statement(s) of Work identifies the necessary documentation your TSP will need to provide you, along with an invoice for services provided. Please submit this documentation to NRCS before payment of services is made.

You are responsible for payment to the TSP for the contracted technical service. You may authorize NRCS to make payment directly to the TSP by signing Form CCC-36, Assignment of Payment. The form can be obtained at any USDA Service Center. To receive reimbursement, the technical service must be complete and documentation must be submitted to the NRCS office by the end of the fiscal year of which the work was performed (i.e., September 30, [insert year]).

– MORE –

NRCS personnel are held to strict standards concerning the confidentiality of our client's records. We will only be able to provide information concerning your conservation plan and/or financial assistance contract to you or by written authorization from you. At the same time, your TSP is not bound by the same statutes as NRCS employees. As such, you should discuss and reach a level of understanding concerning confidentiality with the TSP you hire.

If I can be of any assistance, feel free to contact me at (phone #), or (e-mail address).

Sincerely,

NAME

District Conservationist (and equivalent)

## 610.102 Authorization Release of Records

To: United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

I hereby authorize the release of my individual records that are in the custody of the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

I authorize release of records to the following named individual(s) or representative(s) of the following organization(s):

List name(s) or organization(s)

\_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize release of the following information:

☐

Any information in my files (initial this block)

or

☐

Only the following information (initial this block)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I understand and acknowledge that NRCS cannot be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of released records.

Name (Please Print:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_